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AUTUMN 1950

*The Five Acts of History*

JOHN KATZ

*Equalism*

R. ARNOLD PRICE

*Kierkegaard's Will to Will*

H. J. BLACKHAM

*Retrospect and Prospect in Rome's Holy Year*

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# THE PLAIN VIEW

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Ὁ μὲν ὀλίγον οὐχ ἱκανόν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτω γε οὐδὲν ἱκανόν. —EPICURUS

*The man who is not satisfied with little is satisfied with nothing*

UBERTATES ET COPIAE VIRTUTIS

—CICERO

*the productiveness and the resources of human quality*

THIS IS THAT WHICH WILL INDEED DIGNIFY AND EXALT KNOWLEDGE, IF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION MAY BE MORE NEARLY AND STRAITLY CONJOINED AND UNITED TOGETHER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN; A CONJUNCTION LIKE UNTO THAT OF THE TWO HIGHEST PLANETS, SATURN THE PLANET OF REST AND CONTEMPLATION, AND JUPITER, THE PLANET OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACTION.

—BACON

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## COMMENTARY

**PROGRESS AND RELIGION.** Modern industrial societies are founded upon science and technology, and their leaders have come to recognize acutely that survival depends upon their becoming highly adaptive societies, and that even then the pace of change may precipitate calamitous dislocations. If the remedy is totalitarian organization, it seems to many worse than the disease. That is the familiar outside of the problem, the question whether the forms and organs of administration in the western democracies can be inventively developed in time to cope effectively with the threat of world-wide chronic economic dislocations. The inside of the problem is seen in the fields of philosophy and of education, and is reflected in the striving of the christian churches to regain a hold upon history.

The influential philosophical schools at the present time are those whose focus of interest is scientific and those whose focus of interest is religious. In America, under the dominant influence of the thought of John Dewey on educational theory and practice, the break with tradition has been almost as complete as in the marxist countries. In the philosophy of education the idea of educating for change stands over against the ideal of handing on a tradition. It is mainly the difference between a religious and a scientific orientation. Whatever one's prejudices, it does not take much human experience to make one recognize that such an opposition between preparation for change and loyalty to tradition is likely to be disastrous if really pressed; and already in America there has been disillusionment and reaction amongst educators, which may have the effect of hardening the opposition. A similar movement of withdrawal to the dogmatic forts from advanced positions of liberal christian humanism has followed the contemporary disillusionment with science and with the secular dogma of progress.

Christopher Dawson argued some years ago in his book *Progress and Religion* that although the idea of progress was not specifically christian, a scientific philosophy of mechanistic determinism consistently could not and did not entertain it, and that it was a science moralized by christianity and an historical religion fertilized by science that gave birth to the idea, and therefore a separation of the two is a divorce which disrupts the essential European tradition. If this is the thesis of a catholic historian trying to save the historical mission of his church, there is plenty of evidence which would be distorted by any other interpretation. But a counter thesis which would marry science to classical humanism has also its evidence, for the post-revolutionary republican tradition in the schools of France has been a classical humanism joined to the ideals and tasks



of a modern state. Such a humanism is well represented in its confrontation with modern science in a recent essay by the great French historian of philosophy Emile Bréhier, *Science et Humanisme*. In this essay his remedy against the dangerous tendencies of the time is a return to the moral self-cultivation of an older discipline.

Plato said profoundly that harmony in the city could only be attained if each man was his own friend; and it is this harmony with oneself, so difficult to get, so different from vanity and complacency, which the Stoics found to be the essence of wisdom. It is however this inner culture of the self which our modern societies, anxious above all things to get a conformity which serves their purpose, neglect too much; all the sociology (one might almost say, sociolatriy) of the 19th century has had in this respect a baneful influence, in taking from man confidence in himself, without seeing that in this way it enfeebled the society it wanted to establish. . . . It is necessary now to do everything to give man a consciousness of the universal nature which he has in him and which alone constitutes his dignity and greatness.

It is just the universal nature of man which all the most influential schools of philosophy today (outside Christian orthodoxy) agree in putting in question. All the more reason for urgently tackling the problem. In this field we cannot afford to have specialists: the orthodox and the sceptics, the conservatives and the revolutionaries. These oppositions are far too clumsy and dangerous for the delicate co-operation which is demanded of those who want civilization to survive. Each of us has to combine in himself the responsible qualities of the conservative and of the revolutionary, and to found his thinking upon some permanent basis so that he is open to the future because rooted in the past and ready for change because equal to dealing with it. Humanists *pur sang* can compete, and at points co-operate, with christian humanists in finding this *via media* between eternity and flux.

**B**EYOND GOOD AND EVIL. A fashionable bit of current slang describes aberrant behaviour as definitely non-adult. Inelegant, no doubt, but perspicacious and up-to-date in every way, since modern psychology has gone so far in reducing sin to mal-adjustment, excessive functioning, compensation, fixation, and the like notions derived from a norm of natural development in a given social environment. All the vanities, spites, and sheer idiocies of mankind are recognizably childish, and, not less so, the mere insignificance of many opinions and the light weight of many minds and personalities, but there is irony in describing the strong he-man,

Nietzsche's man of the good conscience, the hero of the heroic age, as definitely non-adult. This is the tough guy whom the moralists have been trying to get at throughout the ages; he has put the greatest of them on their mettle, and when they have done their best they have been left with an uneasy conscience that they have not really nor finally answered him. Does he now fall at an unconsidered touch which is the unkindest cut of all, a man whose personal prowess and formidable challenge to a world of weaklings is nothing but a symptom, a sign by which the merest child now reads that he is definitely non-adult? If so, the psychologist has beaten the moralist at his own game.

On the other hand, of course, it may be plausibly argued (with very half-hearted resistance from the psychologists) that the world owes everything to its neurotics and lunatics, if not to its crooks, and that if everyone were as mature, solid, and satisfied as we could wish, the resulting mediocrity would be appallingly dull—an argument that is not likely to appeal very strongly to anybody who is suffering at home from the boredom of a woman who keeps her soul alive by provoking rows. Neurosis and worse may be the price we have to pay for genius, and it may be too high a price. However, this is not the point in question; what we are really asking is whether the notion of maturity supersedes the notion of morality, whether the mature person is the modern saint, and the sinner is only very immature without being very young. What precise relationship is there, if any, between being moral and being mature?

If morality is defined as doing what is socially expected of one in the various relations of life and if maturity is defined as being spiritually one's own master, the two may seem more likely to be in conflict than to be interchangeable. In practice, the two can be and are close together and whatever conflict there is between them is productive and not merely negative: the mature person has come to terms with life, has settled his own problems and is living actively beyond himself, and he therefore has room and time for other persons and is able and ready to help them; the immature person is still dependent or rebellious, or both, still preoccupied with himself and his problems, still a spectator and judge of the universe. How does one become mature, come to terms with life and solve one's personal problems? There is no ready universal answer, but always the lonely pilgrim's progress, aided by interpretations of life offered by religions and philosophies, and by the demands and ideals of current morality. Thus maturity and morality are at the limit complementary notions, and each plays a part in the development of the other.

The mature person establishes his own standards of good and evil,



higher than, not defiant of, common standards, and not being mechanically perfect becomes a sinner in his own eyes, which he finds sad but not shattering. This high plateau of normal maturity rises to peaks of greatness in the persons who are not only mature but also outstandingly gifted. What we aspire to is a mature level of society lying above the present heights of saints, heroes and martyrs. As Whitehead puts it: "The problem is not how to produce great men, but how to produce great societies."

**GOING TO THE DOGS.** The dire feelings about the future of their country inspired in old gentlemen by the graceless behaviour of modern youth can be taken with a pinch of salt (or is it snuff?) because the exacting cause is usually a marked lack of respect for the dignity of seniors. Therefore they are judges in their own case, and lacking the faith of Elisha, or recognizing that she-bears are in short supply and that even the Almighty is not likely nowadays to make them available for dealing with insolent lads, they content themselves with the utterance of prophetic thunder and cast for a rather vague role as agents of the punishment to come that species of the animal genus sometimes known as the friend of man. It is all rather ludicrous, and nobody takes it any more seriously than the villagers who refused to be drawn any more by the boy's cry of Wolf. The comparison of course starts a doubt, for the wolf does come: countries do go to the dogs, decline and fall is a sober historical theme.

How is the true jeremiah distinguished from the old gentleman in the club? Rather, without waiting for the prophecy, by what evidence can we be sure in time that the nation has begun to go downhill? It is all so confusing, partial, and contradictory, and everyone is a victim of hopelessly misleading impressions. Statistics of juvenile delinquency, of divorce, of certain diseases, of alcohol consumed, or of the volume of betting, no doubt all mean something, but it is safer to interpret dreams. The old gentleman judges the rising generation by its departure from the habits and standards of his own day, as the public judge works of art by what they are accustomed to. At least that is a standard, and the judgement is not meaningless, even if it expresses little more than political bias and personal spleen. If one also recognizes that it is not adequate, that the performances in question have their own aims and set their own standards, nonetheless the new performance is not outside the range of questions raised by the old. If classics are forsaken for technics, some raise a cry of woe but it is not the discipline in exactitude that has been sacrificed. If industries pass from private to public ownership, the performance of the industry in private



hands remains a challenge and a standard although the comparison is complex and requires elaborate new criteria. Can we sensibly raise the condition of England nowadays and deal significantly with its main aspects having an eye open for advances and for fallings off? Could this be done reliably in, say, decennial surveys, we should have a finger on the moral pulse of the nation, and could gain a shrewd idea of what symptoms really were dangerous.

Such a survey would attempt to bring into one focus all the scattered material relevant to a judgement on the actual performances of the nation by comparison with previous decades measured as nearly as possible by the same criteria—establishing a standard evaluation of the nation. A team of experts would present, interpret, and discuss the facts and figures in every department of national activity. There could hardly be a more useful piece of sociological work. It would be culpable optimism to hope that it could ever be used to shut up the old men, but one might venture to think that it could save the west from decline, and one day an ingenious Chancellor, inspired by poetic justice, might devise a special tax with incidence mainly if not wholly on elderly blimpish males which would be used to finance the survey and its publication.

## THE FIVE ACTS OF HISTORY

### THE DRAMA OF WORLD HISTORY

**M**ANKIND has arrived at the fifth act of the drama of civilization. But as the performance is continuous, the fifth act of the old drama is the first act of the new.

In the first act, the principal *dramatis personæ* are Egypt, Babylon, and China. Their work is to create the earliest civilizations in the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates and the Hoang-Ho.

In the second act, nomads from the steppes and forests, dependent for their livelihood upon the pasturing of their flocks and herds, infiltrate into the territories of the cultivators. Abel, the herdsman, becomes the overlord of Cain, the tiller of the soil. India, Israel, Persia, Greece, and Rome are the principal *dramatis personæ* of the second act.

The third act is the *dénouement* of the civilizational process. Nearly all the principals lie dead or dying upon the stage of history. They have finished their experiment with life; and the experiment has seemingly failed. We have reached the epoch of man's great defeat.

The *dramatis personæ* of recorded history are the organized societies. Within such societies, the individual Indo-Aryan or

Israelite or Greek possessed a spiritual as well as a material home. And when these societies disintegrated, the homeless fugitives possessed nothing but their memories. Memories were transfigured by imagination into a picture of lost paradise. The fugitives construed their fate to be the fate of the world, and the tragedy of a broken society to be the tragedy of mankind. A vision of a dissolving civilization in a dissolving universe supplied the fugitives with religious consolation. And if in virtue of an intellectual tradition, originating in happier days, they put their vision into words, with a show of logic to connect the words, they developed a metaphysic or theology. Their religion could now be justified by a world-view or ideology. And the fugitives joined themselves to other fugitives, retreating of necessity or of choice from defeated and broken societies, to pool their loneliness in the asylum offered by a Christian monastery, a Jewish ghetto, or a Buddhist vihara.

The religious, and not the political societies, the churches, and not the States, are the *dramatis personæ* of the third act. Roman Catholicism, Greek Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism are the collective personalities which dominate the third act.

But the third act is not the last act. If it were, then human history would be a tragedy, of which Man crucified on Calvary is the appropriate symbol. But the third act is followed by the fourth act—the great defeat by the great revival. The great revival in the fourth act is the Classical Renaissance. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Graeco-Roman civilization comes to life again. The Renaissance is followed, in the wonderful four centuries between 1500 and 1900, by an expansion of civilization which is without parallel.

The geographical revolution, which began with the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, added new worlds to the old. The scientific revolution, of which Copernicus and Galileo, Kepler and Newton were the protagonists, changed the astronomical status of the earth. From the metropolitan city, the earth was degraded to the rank of a mere parish of the universe. The industrial and mechanical revolutions harnessed the latent energies of coal and oil to the service of man, bringing nearer his final emancipation from the animal struggle for existence. The great inventions of agriculture and of the domestication of animals which we owe to the barbarians of the Neolithic age, prior to the commencement of civilization proper, were the heralds of this larger emancipation, which, when it comes, will be the turning point of human history.

The fourth act has produced a single civilization—the civilization of western man.



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We can distinguish between the contributions made to western civilization, over the last four centuries, by Italians, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, and Americans. The contributors were encouraged by the newly developed nationalities to which they severally belonged; but they were united by the knowledge that they had outgrown the common nursery in which their teachers had been the monks and scholastics of medieval Catholicism.

To these revolutions in economics and ideology must be added a revolution in politics. The English, American, and French Revolutions had this in common with the scientific and the industrial revolutions: they produced—and produced suddenly—unprecedented types of human experience.

No one could have anticipated these newly emergent experiences—the thinkers of earlier epochs least of all. Aristotle could summarize the experience of life acquired by the Greeks within the limits of city-state civilization. Thomas Aquinas could perform the same office for the civilization of medieval Catholicism. But, as Hegel reminds us, the Owl of Minerva does not start on her flight until twilight has descended upon a civilization. As to what would happen when the sun rose on a new civilization, the owls could not tell us—not even in their dreams.

It is natural for broken societies to console themselves with the thought that, on their exit from the world stage, the play ends. After the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, the Jewish Church advanced the theory that Moses had spoken the last substantial word of human experience. After the fall of Rome to the Goths, the Christian Church advanced a similar theory about Jesus. After the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols under Hulagu—a disaster which brought the Caliphate to an end, Islam, no longer a State but a Church, developed a not dissimilar doctrine about Mohammed. But the play was not really over. After the third act came the fourth. All the theories which asserted that with the coming of the Churches life had stopped, were refuted by the rise of western civilization.

And even western civilization is not the last word of time. Endings are beginnings. All the types of individualism—the Renaissance, Protestant, Liberal and Capitalist types—have been at work over the last four centuries, transforming the Catholic synthesis into the modern world. But the time has come for a new synthesis—not only of doctrine but of purpose. We need a new ideology to fortify our will to a new civilization. Individualism, having cleared the site of the old building, has prepared the scaffolding for the new. But if it is true that the latest type of individualism feels no real interest in the building of a new house of mankind, that it prefers to with-

draw within the privacy of the self, it will degenerate into mere anarchism. And anarchism, whether quietist or nihilist, is a liability and not an asset of mankind.

The masses are entering into history, and not the Soviet masses only, but the Arab, the Chinese, and the Indian. No generalizations about human nature based upon the experiences of Jews and Greeks and Romans during the thousand years between 600 B.C. and 400 A.D. will cover all the new experiences of European and Asiatic man.

Philosophic analysis of past experience can throw some light upon the probable grammar, but not much upon the ever changing vocabulary of new experience. New experience is gained by experimenting and adventuring with life. The fourth act of history is drawing to a close. The curtain will soon be raised for the fifth act. Perhaps in some parts of the world the curtain has risen already.

But the fifth act will not be the last. Even if the fifth act fulfils the hopes of humanists by creating a new world community for the common man, there will be no stop to the human adventure. The play will continue.

Civilization is the latest episode in the history of the human race. Savagery and barbarism are earlier episodes. Some thirty to forty thousand years ago, the Palæolithic savage was hunting animals and painting their portraits upon the dark walls of his cave. Eight to ten thousand years ago, the Neolithic barbarian discovered how to domesticate animals and how to raise crops by tilling the soil. To these two great inventions none was added of comparable importance until we come to the steam engine and the electric dynamo in the nineteenth century.

Civilization proper is only six thousand years old. The Jewish calendar, in starting from the Creation of the World, is not far wrong in its reckoning if by "World" we understand not our Earth, but the world of civilized societies.

Among the earliest of such civilized societies were those of Egypt and Mesopotamia. It is not surprising that these figure prominently in the pages of the Old Testament, when we remember that Palestine and Syria form a land bridge between the valleys of the Nile and of the Euphrates-Tigris.

The first act of the drama of civilization was played out independently in four different territories between which there was, originally, little or no communication. Egypt and Mesopotamia we have already mentioned. The others are the early Chinese civilization in the valley of the Hoang-Ho and the Aegean civiliza-



tion in the Eastern Mediterranean. In pre-Hellenic times, the Aegean civilization flourished in such cities as Knossos in Crete, Mycenae in the Peloponnese, and Troy on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles. We propose to call the four primordial civilizations the civilizations of the First Order.

How does civilization differ from barbarism? There is no sharp line of demarcation; but we can say of a civilized society that it will have certain characteristics which are not usually found in a barbarous one.

First, a civilized society is on a considerable scale: its numbers very much exceed those of a hunting clan, or of a tribal community, where, usually, the strips of cultivated soil lie in and about the same village.

Second, these tribes and clans are face-to-face societies which have grown up silently without conscious forethought; whereas civilized societies are consciously controlled from a civic centre. The physical distance between the governor and governed is covered, in part, by a chain of subordinate officials, in part, by communication through written word.

Each of the four civilized societies of the First Order has developed independently its own distinctive form of writing. The existence of Egyptian hieroglyphics, Mesopotamian cuneiform, Chinese calligraphy, and the Minoan script of Knossos (as yet undeciphered) suggests the generalization: Where there is no writing, there is no civilization.

The family, the clan, and, to a considerable extent, the tribe, can rely upon the sexual, maternal, and gregarious instincts and upon the sentiments, which are these same instincts irradiated by imagination, to supply them with the necessary cement. But if one tribal community is stationed in the Nile Delta and the other in Upper Egypt, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the First Cataract, instinct and sentiment will not suffice. If the two communities are to be brought into conscious relationship despite the five hundred miles separating them, social intelligence will have to intervene. In the case of Egypt, the socially intelligent intervener was Menes, the first Pharaoh, who, about 3,400 B.C., put a stop to the chronic warfare between village communities by establishing a State government for Upper and Lower Egypt with its civic capital at Memphis.

The State, perhaps the most fateful of the institutions of civilized man, was now launched on its career. The existence of the State is another of the marks by which a civilized society can be identified.

The State is a rational technique, or, perhaps we had better say, a rationally ordered set of techniques for the large-scale management of human relations. These techniques are invented by human intelligence. It is, of course, possible to analyse them. But we have to wait for Second Order civilizations and the first symptoms of social malaise before an attempt at social analysis is made by men of a new type—the philosophers.

It was enough for the political managers of the First Order societies to know that their techniques worked. In Egypt, at least, a stable society of landlords and serfs came into existence which lasted for nearly three thousand years. The practical intelligence of a Menes had created a political framework within which the social habits that were formed began to operate with the punctuality and precision of instinct. From the Egyptian point of view, it was unnecessary to waste a second dose of intelligence upon an enquiry as to why the first dose worked.

And so the first act of the drama of civilization produced an agrarian economy with an income well above subsistence level; an authoritative State with an autocratic ruler of such unlimited power that the people ranked him with the gods; and an official religion where the deities were the guardians of fertility.

The first act is the longest. The Egyptian and Mesopotamian societies, which are typical civilizations of the First Order, lasted for three thousand years; and this is half the total of the six thousand years of civilized life. The second act is shorter. The Graeco-Roman society, which is a typical civilization of the Second Order, lasted from about 1000 B.C. to 400 A.D.; and this is less than a quarter of the total of six thousand years. The third act is shorter still. The society of Western Christendom is a good example. It preserved its Catholic solidarity for only a thousand years—from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D.; and this is only a sixth of the total. And the fourth act is the shortest. Western civilization is only four centuries old—one-fifteenth of the total—and is already showing signs of passing into something distinctively different.

If we extend our survey beyond the civilized, to the barbarian and savage societies, we observe that the barbarism of the Neolithic period lasted for about four thousand years; and that is two thirds as long as the years of civilization. And the savagery of the Palaeolithic period lasted for at least thirty thousand years, which is five times as long as the years of civilization.

Evidently, the uncivilized societies are longer lived than the civilized; and the earlier orders amongst the civilized societies are longer lived than the latter.



## THE SCIENCE OF CIVILIZATION

Can we discover the reason for the progressive shortening of the life-span in the successive orders of civilization?

Whether the reason is discoverable or not, we expect a generalized science of anthropology to throw some light upon the question. Anthropology is the study of the behaviour of human beings when associated in societies. And the science of civilization, that is, of civilized societies, ought to be a special department of anthropology in much the same way as zoology is a special department of the general science of biology. Unfortunately, the term 'anthropology' has been narrowed to mean the study of primitive societies—such as those of the Red Indians of America or of the Negritos of Polynesia. In thus restricting anthropology to the study of primitive societies, there is a suggestion that civilized peoples are too original, too complex, and too unpredictable for their behaviour to be profitably scrutinized by the methods of naturalistic science. A supernatural Providence may perhaps be credited with a knowledge of the secret of civilization, but the scientist is then usually considered the last person to whom Providence will reveal it.

There is an ambiguity about the relations between a society and the individuals composing it which can be slurred over when we are studying a savage clan or a barbarous tribe. For the social solidarity of a clan or tribe is unmistakable, though hard to define. Besides, a clan or tribe consisting at most of a few hundred or a few thousand individuals is a face-to-face society whose whole extent can be perceived by the eye and ear of a clansman or tribesman as well as by those of the observing anthropologist. But when the society is as extensive as the Roman Empire or the Roman Catholic Church, its unity will not be apparent without a thorough-going analysis of the ways in which society functions.

A society is in some sense one, and yet it is composed of many individuals. There are logical difficulties in relating the one to the many. And there are even more serious difficulties in interpreting psychologically the behaviour of a child when he is assimilating the ideology and morals of the society into which he is born.

Usually we fail to notice that there is anything very remarkable about the process by which a baby born in London becomes an Englishman, and a second baby, identical in physiological make-up with the first, but born in Moscow, becomes a Russian. Perhaps we might discover how extraordinary this process of "soul-making" is, if using Wells's Time Machine, we could transfer either baby to Memphis, the capital city of Egypt in the Pyramid Age. This

baby, we can confidently assert, would grow up into an ancient Egyptian, believing in the Nile god Osiris, and the Sun god Amon-Re, and in the divine Pharaohs, and holding firmly the conviction that the Egyptian way of life was the final truth about man.

Sociology is one of the youngest of the sciences. Its nineteenth century founders prepared a programme which, if it had been carried out, would have made sociology into a general anthropology—a science of man in society. The subject matter of sociology had to be logically defined. That was the first difficulty. And sociology had to lean heavily on an adequate social and educational psychology. That was another difficulty. But neither of these difficulties has proved as serious a handicap as the individualistic philosophy of the founders. Herbert Spencer, the author of *Man versus the State*, could not control his bias when he came to write *The Principles of Sociology*. We can, if we like, agree with Carlyle, the contemporary of Spencer, that the common man, baking and re-baking the “cake of custom” is mostly a fool, and that the uncommon man lashing savagely at the cake is a Hero. But this opinion will not conduce to success in sociology.

What distinguishes a society from a casually gathered crowd or mob is its common purpose. A luncheon club has a social, and, to some extent, an economic purpose. The purpose of a trade union such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers is exclusively economic. The British Association for the Advancement of Science states its purpose in its title; it is cultural and ideological. The Society of Friends is a religious organization. It is concerned primarily, not with external action in the political and economic spheres, but with internal action upon the feelings and imagination of its members. The purposes of a religious organization—and a religious organization may be a world-wide church as closely organized as that of the Roman Catholics or as loosely organized as that of the Buddhists—are not essentially different from those of a Drama League, a Film Institute, or a British Academy of Art. All such societies promote states of mind which are essentially aesthetic. Such states of mind may eventually discharge their impulsive energy into some form of social action; but that is not their immediate purpose. And finally we have a society as extensive as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Its purposes are at once economic and political, moral and cultural, ideological and aesthetic. And because of the last two of these purposes, the U.S.S.R. is also a society for the promotion of religion—the religion of Communism.

Let us then define civilization as the behaviour of human beings when associated in civilized societies, extending the meaning of

the term 'behaviour' to include behaviour inspired by economic, politico-moral, and ideological motives.

Let us define the science of civilization as the study of causes for the rise, development, and decay of civilized societies.

Every science starts from certain common sense assumptions which it leaves philosophy to criticize, and to harmonize, if possible, with those made by other sciences. The science of civilization is no exception. One of its fundamental assumptions it takes over from post-Darwinian biology. The assumption is that even before the most primitive form of civilized life begins, the individual man is, biologically, a going concern well adapted to living in and with nature. Man's body and mind, at the instinctive and semi-instinctive levels, function in very much the same way as do those of the dog and the sparrow. A dog crossing the road and looking out for travelling motor cars, and a sparrow pecking at a crumb and at the same time taking precautions against possible enemies, are using their minds in much the same way as we use ours. They are selecting and combining from their repertory of inherited muscle movements such movements as can be correlated with the stimuli which are pouring in upon their eyes and ears. These creatures assume without question or enquiry—it is part of their, as it is of our, "animal faith"—that the stimuli are signals diffused from centres of energy in the world external to their bodies which it behoves them to notice; and that the movements with which they respond to these stimuli will preserve their bodies from damage.

When Shakespeare is imagining the figure of Hamlet and Newton conceiving the law of gravitation, they are transcending, but not superseding, the ground-plan of stimuli and response. This is not the traditional assumption about the arts and sciences—especially if the art is high art and the science great science. Most philosophers have asserted that the arts and sciences are the fruits of a spiritual activity for which there is not the remotest analogy in the animal world. To make any other assumption would lead, so these philosophers believe, to a serious lowering of the prestige of man. The spiritual world, they tell us, has no concern with adaptive utilities. The spiritual world sits loose to nature; it is literally "absolved" from nature—it is an Absolute. What troubles these philosophers is not how to account for the aristocratic perfection of the spiritual world, but how to explain the mysterious fact that this high aristocrat is doomed to keep company—in this life at least—with the plebian body and with the worse than plebian animals, plants, and material things of circumambient nature.

We owe to Darwinism the contrary assumption that the historical



incidence of the arts and sciences and even of such "high spiritualities" as philosophy and religion is just as capable of a naturalistic explanation as are the economic and political activities of man.

Darwinism assumes that outside our bodies there is going on in nature a macrocosmic process to which the microcosmic processes within our bodies respond. Why there should be an external world at all, and why, through the natural selection of the fittest to survive in the struggle for existence, a series of animal forms should have emerged culminating in man, Darwinism does not attempt to explain. The infinitely complex macrocosmic process, the infinitely complex microcosmic process, and the relation of mutual adaptation between the two processes are the three *a priori* factors of the human situation. In every intelligible proposition about man and the world they constitute the necessary assumptions. Upon these assumptions all explanations are based. But the assumptions themselves are beyond explanation. They make the mystery of our existence. *Omnia exeunt in mysterium.*

Darwinism, with its empirical standpoint extended to all existence, to man and nature, is the great divide between the ancient and the modern world. No science of civilization, no critical philosophy of history, which does not start from Darwinism, can hope to stand.

A science of civilization cannot make much progress without the assistance of social psychology. For the human individual is born into two societies: the society of non-human nature and the society of civilized man. The doctrine that the human individual is a self-contained, self-enclosed isolate, carrying round with his physical body a sovereign spiritual atom called the soul, is a pure myth—perhaps a necessary myth engendered by the dissolution of traditional societies after the breakdown of the Second Order civilizations.

What is indispensable to a science of civilization is a social psychology of work. Work is thought in action. It is the idea in battle dress, directing real operations upon the external world, upon our physical and social environment. And an operation is real when the energy of the human body is communicated to persons and things outside the body along a route mapped out in imagination and conception. The spade of the landworker extends the points of application of his bodily energy and so economises it; and the energy of the horse-driven plough or of the oil-driven tractor amplifies enormously the available energy of the landworker.

It is so easy to forget that all the artefacts and institutions of a society—of everything that makes civilization an objective reality—

are the outcome of creative work. All the houses, shops, and factories of a city, and all the customary way of behaving of householders, shopkeepers, and factory operatives, are nothing but the past and present tenses of the verb 'to work'. 'City', 'citizen', and 'civilization' are words derived from the same root; and what the root stands for is social work.

Contempt for work is the blot upon the Second Order civilizations. The nomads of the steppes and forests, tending their flocks and herds and themselves producing the materials for their tents and caravans, were indeed workers. In their simple tribal organizations, with very little division of labour and scarcely any class distinctions, they may justly be acclaimed as among the earliest exponents of industrial democracy.

But the same nomads as conquerors, possessing themselves of the lands of the Aegean or Egyptian agriculturists, transvalue their own moral values. Work has now become the badge of the defeated. Gentlemen do not work. They may go camping and pretend that they are reliving the lives of their nomadic ancestors. But in such a festive memorialising of the ancestors they are behaving as artists: actors in the sense of the theatre, on the stage of the imagination and not on the stage of history. In an historical drama the action of the actor is very different from that of the man of action he is portraying. The virtual action in Shakespeare's *Henry V* is not the real action of the men of Agincourt. In camping out as part of a game of make-believe, the intention is not to produce real external changes in the distribution of energies among the persons and things of a nomadic environment, but to produce internal changes in the lay-out and in the emotional energy of one's images. As gentlemanly artists we are interested primarily in the play of ideas and feelings and hardly at all in the motor consequence of these ideas when applied practically to the external world.

It is true that there were landlords, priests, and serfs in ancient Egypt and ancient Babylon, and most probably also in pre-feudal China. But there was no contempt for work. The Pharaohs of the First Dynasty are usually sculptured in the act of cutting the first sods for an irrigation canal. And the mythical Emperors Yao and Shun, beloved of Confucius, are depicted as culture heroes inventing agriculture and the breeding of silkworms. That kings and landlords and priests should be exempt from the work of the agricultural serf was taken for granted—even by the serfs themselves. Social relations had developed too slowly and over too many centuries for any class to be seriously class-conscious. The thousand and one unobtrusive adjustments by which human

beings in a society bring their wills and sentiments into harmony, if continued uncritically for more than a millennium, will prevent them from noticing that their social and moral practices in common with their economic and religious practices are not purely instinctive, but are based upon novel combinations of ideas, of images and concepts, and that these are the directors of the great business of civilization.

The civilizations of the First Order are the unself-conscious civilizations. The fact that they remained substantially unconscious of themselves accounts for their long-lived stability as it does for their final condition of stagnation. In the last years of decadence their institutionalized habits began to operate with the fateful precision of a blind animal instinct. And instincts working blindly cease to be useful whenever there has taken place a drastic change in the environing conditions.

The Second Order civilizations are the first to be highly conscious of themselves. Self-consciousness is their virtue and the secret of their success in philosophy and science. But they pay the price for this virtue in the rapid loss of the social stability which they had enjoyed before they ceased to be nomadic. In the last phase of the Second Order civilizations, this instability degenerates into anarchic individualism. And beyond anarchic individualism there is nothing left except two choices in despair: grovelling to a barbarian Caesar or shutting out the external world in the cold darkness of a monastic cell.

The conversion of the working pastoralist into the leisured owner of agricultural land has had extraordinary and fateful consequences for the life of civilized man. After the first great migration of the nomadic peoples—the first *Voelkerwanderung*—Indo-Aryans, Perso-Iranians, Israelites, and Hellenes installed themselves as conquerors in the lands already cultivated by the civilized societies of the First Order. Abel, the “keeper of the sheep”, becomes the overlord of Cain, the “tiller of the ground”. Abel and Cain, who had at one time been comrades and brothers in the trade union and benefit society sense, are now master and man.

We can trace the first phase of this social revolution in the pre-Exilic books of the Old Testament, in the Homeric poems, and in the earliest form of the Vedic hymns. In these works of art, the conquerors enjoyed retrospectively their own works as men of action. Also they enjoy the assurance that the god of battles—a Yahweh, Zeus, or Indra—who had covenanted to give them victory, was continuing to approve of their behaviour.

In the second phase of Second Order civilization, there is a movement from Religion to Philosophy. Philosophy is criticism



of the working of the human mind when engaged upon the task of creating civilization. And there were many occasions for criticism when the conquering nomad, after a few centuries of lordliness, began to inspect more closely some of the fruits of his conquests. Thales, Confucius, and Gautama Buddha are almost contemporaries. By 550 B.C. it was becoming clear to the best minds among the Greeks, Chinese, and Indo-Aryans that the civilizations of the Second Order which had been developing over the previous seven or eight centuries would require a great deal of reconstructing.

In the third phase of the Second Order civilizations, there is a return movement from Philosophy to Religion. The aristocratic ex-nomad makes three discoveries: about himself, about the unprivileged classes, and about the doubtful value of philosophy when called upon to reconstruct civilization upon a new basis of ideology.

First, the ex-nomad discovers that if war is employed as the principal tool in the building of a new civilization, it can readily wound the hand that wields it. If Abel acquires the habit of killing a possessive and self-regarding Cain, why should not Cain continue the habit by killing an even more possessive and self-regarding Abel? There is a fatal transition from war against the foreigner to war with one's own people, from war against completely alien communities to war within the "family"—to civil war.

Second, the ex-nomad discovers that the common interest which the conquerors have in the exploitation of the conquered, unites, in the long run, neither the conquerors among themselves nor the conquerors with the conquered. He is therefore impelled to revive consciously the image of a divine ruler, a god-king, head at once of state and church, who shall do for the societies of the Second Order what, in the mist-wreathed past, a Menes is reputed to have done for Egypt and Hammurabi for Babylon. The ex-nomad, forgetting or ignoring the democratic traditions of the steppes and forests, has now become an archaizing counter-revolutionary. A weary and disillusioned man, with his will to work exhausted by luxurious living, he calls upon an Alexander, a Chandragupta Maurya, a Chin-Shi-Huang-Ti, an Augustus Caesar, to establish by imperial edict and the force of arms the law and order which are the external minima of social solidarity.

Third, the ex-nomad discovers that there is already too much self-consciousness in his civilization; and that the philosophers, in making it their special business to bring civilization to self-consciousness by revealing the work done by individual minds in

creating it, have done more to disintegrate than to reconstruct society.

For when we discover that what our society does, values, and believes—its economic practice, its moral preferences, and its religious dogmas—have been decided by the thoughts and desires of individuals like ourselves but other than ourselves and most of them now dead, our first impulse is towards a complete scepticism, our second to an amoral nihilism, and only on our third impulse do we perceive that a chaos of competing individualisms, which is all that our scepticism and nihilism can offer, is a poor substitute for an historically developing society.

Socrates, in deriding the Greek Sophists and deprecating the Greek physicist, is taking the first step on the road back from Philosophy to Religion. And the Athenians, in condemning Socrates for his criticism of traditional morals and religion, are taking the same road. The last and decisive step was to be taken by the Emperor Justinian when, nine hundred years later, he closed down all the philosophical schools. Justinian was a Christian emperor in Constantinople, the capital of the still surviving Eastern Roman Empire. His act in closing the philosophical schools was the logical outcome of the act of Constantine in making Christianity, two centuries previously, into the official religion of the Roman Empire.

The extraordinary character of this act of Constantine is not usually appreciated.

From time immemorial, whether among savages or barbarians or among the civilized men of the first two Orders, religion had been an imaginative reliving of a society's experience of life and the world. The popular mind in a society reconstructs, by an act of selective imagination, the historic experiences of its past. The impelling motive of the popular mind is the allaying of its anxieties about the future. In the religious form of imagination, an attempt is made to fuse memories of the past and hopes for the future into a single though complex image. The religious image is an attempt to realize pictorially the very process of human living. Among the vital experiences in the forefront of the picture, there will be, naturally, the gathering or growing of food, the building of huts or houses for shelter, and of a wall round the city for defence, the procreation, nurture, and education, of children, and the day-to-day maintenance in morals and sentiment of the historic and customary community—the clan or tribe or nation—which public opinion links piously with the past and faithfully with the future. Traditional religion, up to the destruction of Second Order civilization, celebrates the economic and social life of

the community, encouraging the "brethren", the "good fellows", to find salvation—to feel safe, in other words—by fortifying their faith in the mundane values of their civilization.

But Christianity is not a religion of the traditional type. It makes use of Greek philosophy as long as that philosophy is a destructive critic of the pagan way of life. But when Greek philosophy betrays a conservative temper, a desire to preserve the mundane values of Graeco-Roman society, the Christian emperor closes down on the philosophical schools.

Christianity preaches salvation away from, and not through, civilization. Christianity cuts out the roots of "natural" and traditional religion. These roots are firmly embedded in man's instinctive life of adaptation to, and reaction upon, external nature. Christianity might supersede, but could not save, the Roman Empire.

Chin-Shi-Huang-Ti, the first Chinese Emperor, united the feudal principalities of China by Bismarckian methods of blood and iron. He caused the "Hundred Books" of classical Chinese philosophy to be burnt because he had no use for philosophic critics and their ideas of social reconstruction. But the great Han Dynasty that followed immediately on Chin-Shi-Huang-Ti made Neo-Confucianism—no longer a critical philosophy but in effect a religion—into the official creed of the Chinese Empire. Neo-Confucianism with a strong Taoist colouring—Taoist mysticism is a purely Chinese creation—thus became a religion of the traditional type, celebrating and consolidating the values and pieties of mundane civilization. China is a civilization of the Second Order because it was established by warlike nomads from the Mongolian steppes. But China is the only civilization of the Second Order to survive into the modern world. China's mundane religion is one of the principal causes why China has maintained, ever since the founding of the Empire, the stability of a First Order civilization.

But even Imperial China has experienced breakdown and the despair of civilization that follows in its wake. In the four centuries between the downfall of the Han and the rise of the Tang Dynasty—the Han and the Tang periods are two of the greatest creative periods in Chinese history—China was attracted to an Indian religion, Buddhism. Buddhism, even more so than Christianity, is a religion of salvation, renouncing and negating the values of mundane civilization.

Asoka, a grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, the first Indian Emperor, tried to do for India what Constantine was to do later for Rome: he made a religion of salvation into the official religion of his empire. Asoka is the first Buddhist emperor of history. But



Buddhism did not save his empire. Buddhism was superseded by the Hinduism from which it originally dissented. Hinduism must also be accounted a religion of salvation. But its negative metaphysic, dismissing the world of economic and political practice as illusory and exalting the world of religious imagination to the rank of the only reality, is not as radical in its nihilism as is the Buddhism to which it gave birth. Traditionally, the Brahmin is encouraged to live the "natural" life of the student and of the householder before abandoning the world for the life of the religious recluse. It is this residuum of Vedic and pre-Brahmanic "naturalism" which, in India proper, has given the Brahman householder the victory over the Buddhist monk.

In the fourth and last phase of Second Order civilizations, the ever-increasing dualism of life and religion proves fatal. No civilized society can survive a complete loss of faith in the mundane value of its civilization.

The empires disintegrate. The Greek, the Roman, and the Indian Empires, the creation of nomads of the first *Voelkerwanderung*, go down before the onset of the barbarian nomads of the second *Voelkerwanderung*. Mongols—Turks, Huns, Tartars—from the steppes between the Caspian Sea and the Behring Straits, North Europeans, from the steppes and forests between the Caspian and the North Sea, and Arabs, from the desert steppes between the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates, overrun the feebly resisting frontiers of civilization.

The empires vanish. But the religions of salvation, with which they were so ephemerally allied, survive. The Churches salvage what is left of the political and economic life of the empires. But only fleshless skeletons are left. The universal churches of salvation opening their doors to "Jew and Gentile, bond and free", to all homeless wanderers uprooted from the soil of "natural" society are *ersatz* empires, substitute polities. The universal churches are about to test the doctrine that man can live by "spirit" alone.

The curtain has risen for the third act of the drama of civilization.

JOHN KATZ

RICHARD ARNOLD PRICE. July 10, 1870—April 20, 1950.

(R. A. Price, who died earlier in the year, was formerly Treasurer of the Ethical Union and at that time founded an Ethics and Economics Trust to be administered by the Union, under which various projects of social research have been carried out; it was under this Trust that a series of articles on the profit-motive in trade and industry appeared in earlier issues of this journal. We print below a memorial note by his son, Mr. Stanley Price, followed by a substantial part of the last chapter of a MS on which he had been at work until shortly before his death, expounding for the last time his scheme for basic incomes which he had advocated persistently throughout his life as a practical means of promoting greater economic equality.)

IF the course of my father's life has any lasting interest to those outside his immediate circle of relatives and friends, it would be because it exemplifies in an individual the evolution of social and religious thought in the last eighty years. Not that his career was very different in outward form from those of hundreds of other successful business men who started from small beginnings in the late Victorian era, but he was himself a thinker and theoriser on social and economic affairs; and, as he had no early education to speak of, his thoughts and theories were drawn directly from his personal and business experience, and were less affected than those of most theorists by book learning.

He was brought up in all the strictness of mid-Victorian non-conformity—as a Congregationalist. The Old Testament was to be literally believed; self-indulgence, whether in the shape of theatre going, dancing, swearing, alcohol, tobacco, late nights or lying abed in the morning, was of the devil; the Sabbath was for chapel going and sacred reading only. The ostensible purpose of this Puritan way of life was salvation—to escape the fires of hell. Yet when the motives of those who practised it at that time are looked at dispassionately it will be seen that they regarded it, too, as a means to material and even commercial prosperity. My father, in fact, in middle life, justified his asceticism and encouraged it in his children on moral and material, not on religious, grounds. His aversion to extravagance and indulgence of every kind never quite left him, although it became more a habit than a principle when he grew rich, and weakened considerably in his later years.

From the supernatural dogma of the Puritan creed my father revolted in his early twenties. The popular interpretation of the Origin of Species, and his own spare time study of geology broke his belief in the historical creation. His unbelief was strengthened by friendship with a number of young people—my mother the chief among them—with 'modern' ideas on the rights of women and a cheerful disregard of the more sombre side of Victorian non-conformity.

My grandfather's personality helped in the process. Mr. Richard Price combined a kind and generous nature with a distressing incompetence in business and an implicit faith that Providence would see him through. My father inherited to the full the first of these qualities but, fortunately for his family, neither of the other two. When he left school at the age of 13 he was an only son. Two brothers and a sister had died in infancy or early childhood. My grandmother's health was far from good. My grandfather, after failing as a retail draper, was trying his hand with only moderate success as an estate agent. Financially, things were pretty desperate. My father, with all the chivalrous enthusiasm of boyhood, determined and, indeed, promised to see them through to better times. The struggle was hard, but he succeeded. And when he came, as his way was, to analyse his success he saw it partly as a triumph of rational and human energy over an ineffective submission to a Providence which did not provide.

In the nineties his unquestioning acceptance of the competitive economic and social order was shaken by attendance at lectures of the Fabian Society. But his sturdy faith in personal freedom and personal effort, strengthened by his own success in building up a prosperous business from the verge of bankruptcy, prevented his conversion to a thorough-paced collectivism. Instead, he spent much of his leisure in working out an economic order for society—a kind of Utopia—which should make the best of both the socialist and the individualist conceptions. He called it 'human equality' and even founded a society for its promotion. His belief in the fundamental equality of all men of whatever race, creed or class was genuine and deep. As might be expected, however, from his essentially practical mind, the equality at which he aimed was usually expressed in material terms. His central proposal was for a guaranteed minimum income for every man, woman and child in the country, and he wrote a monograph and many articles elaborating the theme.

Shortly before his death he put his ideas together in the form of a book which was partly autobiographical and partly a compilation of economic theories—capitalism, socialism, communism, and his own 'equalism.' In view of his long association with the Ethical Union and the generous support he gave to it in its most difficult years the editor of *The Plain View* has seen fit to reproduce here parts of the last chapter which develops his own solution of the economic problem.

STANLEY PRICE



## EQUALISM

by the late R. ARNOLD PRICE, F.R.I.C.S.

**CAPITALISM** originated in and was backed by the profit motive, having behind it a terrific drive which has produced nearly all the man-made wealth which we enjoy to-day. Without it the world would have had no ships, no railways, very few houses, shops, factories or other buildings: in fact, very few of the things we look on as the necessities and the amenities of life.

The idea of Capitalism was production for profit. That idea, strictly adhered to, rules out humanism or humanitarianism. As we know, in the worst days of industrialization children of tender years were driven into mines, factories and mills to increase production and profits. In fact, this wage slavery was as bad and in many cases worse than the chattel slavery which this country helped to abolish. Indeed, during the last century, there have appeared many books picturing men of the best repute owning mills and factories where the most shocking conditions existed. These men may have helped to abolish the slave trade yet they looked upon appalling conditions in their own country as inevitable to the march of progress.

Gradually the forces of humanism began to make themselves felt. Public opinion through Parliament brought Factory Acts into force, limiting hours and ages during which labour might be employed, and specifying the conditions of such employment. Apart from this, many employers experimented with better conditions until to-day with practically full employment in operation employers compete with one another in offering not only high wages and holidays with pay but also all sorts of other privileges which would have seemed ridiculous to their predecessors of less than a hundred years ago.

I welcome improved conditions among employed persons, but, holding as I do that the ideal should be the greatest possible measure of equality among all citizens, I am not satisfied that this can ever be achieved under Capitalism.

Employed persons are less than half the population; the other half are of all sorts and conditions. It follows that neither a minimum wage nor any wages policy can provide for the majority. If a policy is required which will cover all of us it must be an income policy and not a wages policy. A good deal is heard of a national minimum, below which level no one should be allowed to fall, but the idea is nearly always confused by mixing up wages with incomes. Even very few economists seem to face the fact that a national minimum must mean a national minimum income, not a national minimum wage.

This brings us up against the question of incentive and production. If incomes are paid without regard to work and production, will men and women continue to work and produce? The answer is: not yet, or in our present form of society. Hence, to begin with, the basic income must be small. As the value of equality is recognized and appreciated, the attitude of the worker to his work, to his duty to society, will gradually alter; the urge to maximize individual welfare will gradually give place to the urge to maximize community welfare.

Inequality of income is the basis of the capitalist system. Socialism, says the economist, was born of the desire for greater economic equality. Capitalism makes use of the profit motive. Socialism condemns the profit motive, and puts forward the good of the community as the object for which we should all work. It has not yet advocated equality of incomes, but its 'Welfare State' policy has resulted in some levelling up, although inequality is still much too marked.

I believe that equality should be applied in the spheres of ethics, politics, economics, and finance. What do I mean?

By equality in ethics I mean, I suppose, much the same as religious people mean when they talk of equality before God. It is the idea that was at the back of the minds of the founders of the American republic who asserted that "all men are born equal". The idea was equally in the minds of the French revolutionaries who proclaimed Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity as the ideals of human relationships.

Trade Unionism, Socialism, Communism, and indeed most revolutionary movements have their roots in the idea of equality. The trouble is that immediately constitutions are set up to translate the ideas into practice, sectional and personal aims and ambitions prevent its realization to any considerable extent so that communities are driven back to accept private enterprise and capitalism as almost the only principles which are capable of successful practical application in a modern society.

Political equality is perhaps a kind of equality which has come to be most nearly realized in practice. In this country and in other countries now, every man and every woman has a vote. That fact is, of course, of the greatest importance, though in Russia and other Communist countries candidature is severely limited to one class, and voting is only for or against one candidate. Such methods seem to violate even the appearance of equality and democracy. Political equality by itself, however, even democratic political equality, will not solve our problem. That, I think, is self-evident. Great hopes have been engendered from time to time by successive

extensions of the franchise, culminating in women's franchise after the 1914-1918 war. I should be the last to deny the rights and benefits of universal franchise, but it will, I think, be generally admitted that its adoption so far has not produced an equalitarian state, though it has undoubtedly helped in the right direction.

We come then to economic equality, which is the prevalent demand of Socialism. We have now had a socialist government in power for four years. What has it done towards achieving economic equality—which I take to mean economic equality for all the individual members in a community?

There are various directions in which economic equality can be forwarded. First let us consider the old socialist cry for the nationalization of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. The present government has nationalized a considerable sector of the national economy. How do these nationalizations affect economic equality? They have been accomplished on the basis of full compensation. Shareholders have been given cash or stock, and there has been compensation for loss of office and employment. On the other hand, many officials, new and otherwise, have been appointed, some at very high salaries. Claims for increased wages and salaries have followed nationalization. These, when granted, of course increased taxable incomes, but with nationalization they have to be paid by the whole community, unless they can be extracted from the consumer of, say, coal or electricity. Neither method of payment seems to have much relation to equality.

It is sought, also, to bring about a greater economic equality by taxation. There is no doubt about the taxation. Last year, wealthy people, including all those with incomes in excess of £2,000 per annum, had to pay a special contribution which, added to surtax, and ordinary income tax, brought the total taxation for the year to considerably more than 20s. in the £. The special contribution was said to be a "once for all" tax, but no government can bind its successors, and many people favour a capital levy, which is what the special contribution amounted to, although it was not levied upon capital. Taxation can undoubtedly be used to equalize spending incomes. It can also be used to increase inequalities, and it can be inequitable and inflationary.

More and more people are being drawn or pushed into government service. With still more nationalization the number will increase still further. Taxation used to involve a demand from and a payment to the tax collector. Now most people are taxed by deduction, either from earnings under the system known as P.A.Y.E., or at the source in the case of investment incomes. The clerical staff required by the Inland Revenue Department for calcu-



lations is enormous, especially if insurance contributions are included. These, being compulsory, are no less taxes because they are called by another name.

I am sure much simplification is called for. As a surtax payer, and as one who has had to contribute heavily to the special contribution, I hereby declare that I would willingly pay the Exchequer a substantial part of my income in taxation provided it is redistributed on the basis of equality. The Socialist maxim "to each according to his need" implies some measure of equality, since elementary needs are more or less the same, and, as I have said, since this government came into power, there is evidence of greater equality; but there are still great inequalities, perhaps of necessity, as long as sectional and personal interests can influence distribution.

So-called earned incomes of people in responsible official positions vary from £300 to £1,000, £2,000, or even £10,000 per annum. Is this range of difference inevitable in the earned category? It is a long way from an equalitarian State. As between earned and unearned incomes the tendency is to approve the earned and penalize the unearned, although the latter may be the fruits of many years' earnings and saving.

In the distribution of the national *real* income, which is the sum total of all the goods and services held, produced and distributed, the most grotesque anomalies occur. When the government distributes income in kind, it almost always makes a loss. Indeed, for a public body to make profits seems almost to be regarded as morally wrong. To my mind, that is not the right view. Any profit made by a government, or by a local authority, should benefit the community as a whole. Whereas to sell goods below their value benefits only a few purchasers.

The theory of the distribution of income has not, to my mind, kept pace with the theory of the distribution of wealth. The Socialist theory calls for a much more equal distribution of wealth, but it has not been realized how much an equal distribution of money could contribute towards that end.

The growth of free distribution of income and money, instead of in kind, has been rapid in recent years. The study of Poor Law principles since the time of their inception, more than three hundred years ago, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, will show how this has come about. The view was that to be very poor was almost, if not quite, a criminal offence involving penalties such as disfranchisement and harsh treatment in the workhouses and other pauper establishments. Now the stigma of pauperism has gone and the Public Assistance Board, a rather benevolent body, is all that is left of the old Poor Law.

It is the complete disappearance of the idea of the criminality of poverty and the growth, at the same time, of the idea that criminality itself is pathological, that is to say that it is due to heredity and environment, and also a conviction that equality is a principle that calls for much more positive exploitation than it has hitherto received, that have led me to write this book with the suggestion that the principle of equality should be extended to the financial sphere.

That the more equal distribution of wealth would be a good thing has been widely recognized. Even the Conservative Party say they would like to see everybody a capitalist and the owner of some property in a distributive state. But they do not propose to allocate some property to each individual. They only advise people to save and invest, which is a very slow process for the majority and unattractive to many.

What people require is income. The only reason for saving instead of spending is to create and accumulate capital which shall of itself produce income (unearned). You see what it means. Taking three per cent. as the normal rate of interest, and £300 per annum as a very modest competence required on retirement, one has to accumulate £10,000 in capital to secure that amount of income. In other words, you must save at least £100 per year for 50 years, allowing for compound interest on your savings. How many people are likely, even to attempt to do this? People require income. That is the reason we have claims for ever rising wages, salaries and profits, and claims for increased annuities, pensions and benefits of all kinds.

How is the *real* income of the country, that is the goods and services distributed, to be measured so that we do not try to distribute more than we produce, and thus bring about money inflation and rising prices with consequent hardships to so many people?

At present wages and earned incomes are arranged by negotiation of a more or less peaceful nature. In private enterprise supply and demand are limiting factors. In public employment the wages or salaries are in theory supposed to correspond to wages and salaries paid in private enterprise for similar jobs. This theory, however, does not always fit the practice. As nationalization proceeds, the comparison with rates in private enterprise becomes increasingly difficult.

A minimum wage based on the cost of living is frequently advocated, but if a minimum wage is an equal minimum it would cease to be a wage because wages are earned income and are therefore necessarily unequal.

The government is also frequently called upon to produce a national wages policy. Schemes have been put forward, some of a most ingenious character. Psychiatrists and others may be able to estimate character and ability, but I think that these estimates will not take the place of old-fashioned supply and demand. Worth must be proved as well as estimated, and, like the pudding, proof lies in the consumption.

What has all this to do with Equality? It shows, I think, that the equality of income to be obtained in the economic and financial sphere must be looked for outside earned income, that is in the field of unearned income. In that field there can be much greater equality, although it is impossible to say just how much until we try to find out. The only way we can try to find out is to institute a national system of basic incomes allocating to each individual member of the community a minimum or basic income paid as a first charge on all our resources, thus recognizing the right of every person to a share in that part of the national income which is derived from national capital in existence when the individual is born.

This birthright is claimed for every citizen. It is a new conception, the merits of which, as far as I know, have not yet been seriously considered by those who frame our laws and institutions. Whatever its other merits, it is at least a possible and concrete proposal.

I have just been reading (24th July, 1949) Mr. Churchill's election speech. One or two things he says are so intimately connected with the subjects under discussion that I think they should be quoted. Mr. Churchill says, "We cannot uphold the principle that the rewards of society must be equal for those who try and for those who shirk, for those who succeed and for those who fail." No: but who does uphold that principle? But, he says, "We must try to maintain the social services—which assure the whole mass of the people, whether successful or not, a minimum standard of life and labour below which no one is let fall."

Does this really amount to more than the old poor law principle that if you become destitute you shall not be allowed to die? Yet Mr. Churchill upholds the welfare services which, including education, are costing a thousand million pounds per annum. The armed forces are costing nearly as much. Even with aid from abroad we are not making both ends meet. Hence the necessity for the special contribution tax which is, in fact, a tax on capital.

To return to equality as an ideal and basic incomes as its most practical expression, Mr. Bernard Shaw is one of our leading men who appreciates the value of this idea. In a recent letter to *The New Statesman* he writes, "the figures do not matter, the point is the



establishment of a basic income as a necessary political conception." But although the figures do not matter in fixing the initial amount there are certain conditions which should be taken into consideration.

The introduction of equality into the field of the financial income of individuals will be a revolution of the first order, albeit one hopes a peaceful one. Never before has mere existence as an individual human being carried with it the right to any share of the national financial income, although sectional groups and individuals have been recognized as being entitled to assistance from the State. Before the Poor Law all assistance was left to private charity administered chiefly by the monks from wealth belonging to the Church. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and confiscated their wealth this fund ceased to exist and after various intermediary expedients the Poor Law came into existence in 1601. This recognized the principle of state relief of destitution, but, as I said before, it was a penal system from which few benefited. It was, however, the first time the right of an individual to an income without work had been recognized, but the condition precedent to this right to receive income without work was poverty. After three hundred years, the right has been admitted in recent times among more and more groups, and more and more persons. Go into our thousands of post offices all over the country at any time they are open, you will find millions of people drawing money for doing nothing. One draws income because he is young, from birth up to age 15 and over. Others draw income because they are old—women over 60 and men over 65. In many cases pensions start much earlier, say from 50 upwards in special cases.

Much more unearned income is dispensed by the State in various ways. The idea of a Means Test, that is that people should only be assisted if they really need assistance, once very prevalent, is being whittled away. It is certainly inquisitorial and objectionable, and would be unnecessary in an equalitarian state.

Let us try to imagine the beginning of an equalitarian state in Britain. Parliament has enacted for everyone a basic income of 10s. weekly involving a charge of, say, one thousand millions in the National Budget, but making it quite clear that this is not intended to be an inflationary measure, but an adjustment of personal incomes in favour of unearned incomes at the expense of earned incomes. Thus money issues of 10s. weekly and upward will remain as before, but in each case 10s. weekly will be payable through the State as a basic income not liable to fluctuation.

All earned incomes (being those of the majority of the population) shall be reduced by 10s. weekly, corresponding reductions being

made in prices for all goods produced and distributed, and for services generally, thus reducing the cost of living, while keeping money incomes stable; in fact, causing deflation instead of inflation.

The one thousand millions will be met by the reduction or the absorption of some existing social services, such as old age pensions, children's allowances, etc. The balance will be met by taxation, preferably by direct taxation, graduated in the direction of equality.

The basic income, once established, will, of course, be considered as to amount year by year in the light of development and experience. It should go a long way towards solving the problems of poverty and unemployment, and of limiting strikes and disputes about wages because these would be relatively less important. Class feeling and jealousy would tend to disappear as greater equality prevailed. If its principles are understood, basic incomes may be a means of improving industrial efficiency, increasing real production and ensuring more equal, and therefore fairer, distribution of the national cake.

This, then, is the scheme which I hope I have made clear. It proposes to add the principle of equality to capitalism, ensuring that some proportion of the products of enterprise shall be distributed equally, the amount of such proportion being decided by parliament in a democratic way. Parliament could, of course, scrap the whole scheme, but once basic incomes are established I think this is very unlikely.

Basic incomes express in practical form the principle of equality which is said to be at the root of both Socialism and Communism. Basic incomes retain individual freedom and liberty. Socialism as practised now in Great Britain through nationalization and other ways tends to restrict individual choice and to limit the free flow of energy and enterprise.

I must not be taken as an opponent of all nationalization. There are many forms of enterprise, particularly of a monopolistic nature, such as railways, which should be in public ownership. On the whole the present government has, I think, made a wise selection. Whether the financial liabilities to which the nation has been committed will be justified by results remains to be seen.

The Communist system usually associated with Soviet Russia and her satellites seems to be the reverse of freedom and liberty as we understand it. Equality as an ideal was at first given some recognition in an attempt to pay equal wages to all. This system, as might have been anticipated, broke down. It is, of course, an entirely different proposition from a basic income. Since the idea of wage equality was abandoned in Russia there seem to have been few, if any, further attempts to achieve equality either in incomes or other-

wise. Yet, if Communism is not based on equality, what is it based on?

There are many people who believe in greater equality, economic, political, social and financial, who take exception to the words "the greatest possible." What is it they fear? Is it that if we put equality first some people would get too much, or that they will get too little? I think Sidney Webb was right when he spoke of "the inevitability of gradualness." If so, this shows that the approach to financial and economic equality must be gradual. Individuals cannot quickly climb from too little to too much. It also follows that to reduce the incomes of those who have too much must also be a slow though salutary process. Once our legislators accept equality as an aim they will review everyone's income, including their own, with a view to fixing the equalitarian basis.

It does not follow that the greatest possible measure of equality will, at any rate for very many years, be anywhere near equality itself. Regard must be had to needs. The basic income must be equal. That is a principle. It should also be as large as possible. That is also a principle, I believe. How large is it possible for it to be? That is a matter for discussion and argument, and will have to be decided in our democratic way.

A very great majority of people today are handicapped by the accident of birth. Free education and most of our social services are the attempt to correct these handicaps. One trouble is that, at present, we do not know how far such services can be carried. Income on the basis of equality is a measure of service and will pull us up when we find we are just inflating or devaluing our currency, instead of increasing our real income.

At present this "pulling up" has to be done by other means. We are told now, for instance, that personal incomes, profits, and prices should be kept down, although there are few signs of an example being set us in this respect in government circles. Taxation, however, exercises an effective cut in incomes. This cut, I am told, may be up to 95 per cent. in respect of the largest incomes. Nobody can have a spending income of more than £6,000 per annum even if he has a statutory income of £100,000 or more.

It must be borne in mind that the value of capital goods has doubled or trebled since the war. A house worth £600 pre-war now fetches anything from £1,200 to £2,000 with vacant possession. No tax is payable on this increase in money value, so that a seller pockets £600 to £1,400 in cash which he can use as income to augment his purchasing power. This sort of thing has happened and is happening very often. It is largely responsible for high prices and high standards of living. The Government would have liked



to control prices as well as rents, but found it impossible to do so.\* It is questionable whether to control rents, except perhaps during a war, is a wise thing to do. Free rents would of course have led to increases to conform to currency depreciation, but available accommodation would have been much better distributed, and much unfairness and confusion would have been avoided. The law of supply and demand distributes goods and services according to the length of our purses. To my mind it is better as a principle to ensure that everyone has sufficient income to pay a reasonable rent than for the State to endeavour to supply everyone with a house at a rent which each can afford to pay.

Apart from taxation, another source from which basic incomes might be obtained is in the profits arising from nationalized industries. Even if private profit-making is bad there is no reason why public profit-making should be considered bad. Indeed, public profits distributed as basic incomes will be for the benefit of everyone instead of for the benefit of sections of the public such as wage or private profit earners or consumers in particular industries. This public profit earning is the spirit we want to encourage. Basic incomes will encourage it and may lead, as Socialists desire, to the ultimate substitution of public for private enterprise.

By this suggested constitutional system of real equality we are offered an alternative to violent revolutionary systems of bogus equality through modern Communism, involving loss of freedom, even the freedom to think as one chooses, and a consequent degradation of humanity.

The objection to Capitalism is that it creates great inequality which there is a growing refusal to tolerate. The objection to Socialism is that while it seeks greater equality it fails to stimulate initiative and enterprise, and tends to create a parasitic class under the guise of a welfare state. The objection to Communism is that, under the influence of Karl Marx, it has adopted an economic theory and a materialistic philosophy which are evidently wrong and which make violence and war inevitable, and rule out the humanist point of view.

Equalism, by way of basic incomes, recognizes the productive force behind Capitalism yet seeks to minimize its inequality. Equalism accepts the Socialist idea of equality, but points out that because it is an ideal it can never be fully realized, so that we must be content with the greatest possible measure of equality.

\* The real remedy for the private appropriation of land values lies in land nationalization. The way to bring this about without revolution is discussed in my little book *Public Freeholds*, a commentary on Chapter X of the *Uthwatt Report*.

This measure of equality must be ascertained by experiment through a very long-term policy, beginning with the institution of small basic incomes increasing in amount as experience proves the practicability of the idea. It will be recognized that this must be indeed a very long-term policy. No one can say how long it will take or how far it is likely to be achieved. In a system of basic incomes we have the beginning of a new and equitable order of which no one can see the end.

Because precise equality is impossible (outside mathematics) and because many forms of equality are not only impossible but undesirable (like equality in height, weight and many merely physical qualities) many people think that the whole idea of equality is moonshine, and refuse to consider it seriously. They are, of course, wrong, for equality in health, intelligence, morals and education is increasingly admitted by governments and those in authority to be a legitimate objective. So, also increasingly, is economic equality. I am seeking to add financial equality as a necessary sequence to these objectives. My argument is that unless financial equality is added the greatest possible achievement in public health, intelligence, morality, education and economics is impossible. That is the case for equalism.

## KIERKEGAARD'S WILL TO WILL

IF we suppose for a moment (*pace* all existing philosophers) that Kierkegaard's polemic has clear felled the lower slopes of the philosophic mountain where modern afforestation begins, what would he expect to accrue in the natural regeneration to follow? The thought which sprang up again with a return to the existing individual would be limited but lived (as he said of Greek thought, but with only a small area of it in mind), the primacy of the ethical would be restored; thought would not rule in the empyrean but emerge in response to the exigence of the individual, serving to bring him to the point of choosing to will absolutely, thus positing good and evil and bringing into existence a positive self, which in the concrete absolute choice (informed by thought) would become something definite, and by persistence definitive. Instead of being fertilized by thought, will had been choked and forgotten under the thick growth of knowledge, the encyclopaedic mass of information, the infinitude of facts quarried by industrious observers from inexhaustible natural resources. The only way to vitalize accumulating knowledge and sift its relative importance was to call attention to the neglected *how* and ignore the venerated *what*, raising the question of its relation to the will, to human interests, not least the primary interest of becoming a human being. The *how* was the clue to the value of truth, revealing its part in the life of an existing individual. By stressing the *how* Kierkegaard did not mean to offer an operational definition of truth in the practical sense in which scientific truth is defined by the prescribed public procedures of scientific method, which qualifies the *what* of the scientific proposition by the *how* of the way in which it is arrived at and the way in which it is to be used, thus providing the rules for its interpretation and its proof. When he gives as a formal definition of truth, "An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual," he is indicating a qualitative *how* as the measure of truth-value from a personal point of view, certifying not the validity of a truth but its relevance. This concentration of interest upon thought which is strictly relevant to the prime decisions of an existing individual's personal life is Kierkegaard's protest against the age, and that is his excuse for the scandal of effacing the exactitude of the *what* with his qualitative *how*. His recall to first things, just because it is so serious, because it involves him in the drastic reduction of "thinking and willing one thing," jettisoning the natural sciences, treating history as poetry, confining knowledge of the real to immediate awareness of



the ethical reality of the self in the enactment of total decisions, because it is first and last a call to the will, is liable to be mistaken for a technical philosophical subjectivism or for a personal abandonment to the auto-intoxication of choosing to will absolutely, like a young girl in love with love. There is truth in these interpretations, but they are vastly mistaken in so far as they ignore the validity and the primacy of the protest and the recall. Kierkegaard was not contesting the traditional claim of philosophical reflection to guide and guarantee thought and choice; rather, he was employing it in his own way for that purpose. In his own practice, the absolute choice was rationally motivated, the *what* scrupulously determined.

He began with despair, not merely a personal despair but human despair, whether acknowledged or not. When the spontaneity of animal will falters and reflection supervenes, will is put in question: whether one wills to be oneself or does not will it, all the possibilities involve one in uncertainties and are dubious in relation to the ground of one's being, a God posited or not posited. To come into reflective existence as a self-conscious being is to despair, for it is a break with the finite, a withdrawal into uncertainty, and yet one has to proceed and without guidance: one is brought to the point of choosing to will absolutely, yet it is impossible to will absolutely any finite end without a contradiction. And it is impossible with any certainty to infer from Nature the God of Nature. Therefore to hold fast to this objective uncertainty and yet to posit His existence in belief is the only way to choose the infinite with an absolute choice, and to affirm the infinite in oneself. This is the first act of inwardness, the beginning of truth as appropriation. It is made good concretely in an absolute acceptance of the finite self and an absolute renunciation of the finite world, which is nevertheless quietly resumed without perceptible difference in the daily round. The infinite God thus posited in belief in spite of objective uncertainty is at least conceptually possible, but the God-man of history which christianity claims as the truth is conceptually absurd: the breach with immediacy made by the first act of inwardness is widened immeasurably, the passion of tension created by the uncertainty of the first venture is infinitely increased in this second venture based upon the unintelligible. The intelligible God of reason and the immanent infinity of the individual are abandoned for the God of an historical Incarnation, conviction of sin, and salvation by faith. These absolute ventures are total personal decisions taken in absolute loneliness with the utmost responsibility. The authority of another and the example of another are utterly irrelevant, the objective facts, however certain, merely lead one's

steps to the edge. To leap or not to leap is inescapably one's own peril. The absolute ethical isolation of the individual in such a decision is for ever irremediable; that is what it meant to be a human being, an existing individual; that is what speculative philosophy, the modern preoccupation with research, the influence of the press, the establishment of christianity, had obscured and overlaid: Kierkegaard's mature life was "calculated to make people aware" of just that. Once the total decision is taken, the tension is not relaxed but increased, for nothing has happened to change the situation: faith and reason remain discontinuous, the absurd cannot become probable, and with deepening recognition of the risk with repeated renewal of the decision, the suffering is intensified; there is growth in inwardness, but no development of an experience which could confirm the decision.

If one follows Kierkegaard over this course with any sympathy at all, one must admit that he is ruthlessly rational in discerning and posing the alternatives and following through the consequences to the bitter end. He is guided to his decisions by thought, for which he would claim universal validity, although the decisions themselves go beyond thought and are made with the life of a person. One can easily in this case trace his line of thought to the peculiarities of the man and his condition. He is socially heterogeneous and jammed in his own introversion, he feels he shares his father's guilt aggravated by his own, he is melancholy and has no sustained appetite for the finite world. A confessed self-torturer, he sadistically inflicts on himself the cruelty of his thought to whip up an excitement of will and overcome his *taedium vitae*. There is warrant for such a view in the many passages in which the believer hugs the uncertainty to him so that it wounds him, and would increase it so that it hurt him more: passages in which he perversely makes the truth of inwardness a function of uncertainty, with concomitant variations. All this which made the tragedy of the man does not ruin the validity of his thought, although it is distorted by such excesses. Even if his own will were deficient and supplicated his thought for punishment, he was a demoniac witness to the irreplaceable importance of the reflective will to choose the self absolutely and thus originate a life worthy to be called human, authentic. In the will to will absolutely, that is, without reserve and with all one's life, the individual gives himself a formal determination in which the empirical self is transcended and becomes purified and intensified, a value and a source of value. This formula is more than an adverbial qualification of the Kantian ethical formula which determines the will to will only what can be willed universally, for it integrates both the *how* and the *what*, and it is

grounded not merely in abstract reason but in the whole personal nature and life of the existing individual. A man can only will absolutely in an original choice, which is also a choice of himself, and from which his subsequent moral decisions springs spontaneously. In stressing the *how* of total original ethical choice, Kierkegaard was giving an operational definition of ethical good, not merely endorsing the *what* of knowledge with personal relevance.\*

What would have been Kierkegaard's opinion of the determination of this total ethical will offered by Hegel, so strongly in contrast with his own? It is odd that he did not deal with it at all, for his sustained polemic against Hegel is a complaint that Hegel has forgotten he is an existing individual and has left out the ethical. Whereas, of course, Hegel is very anxious to point the moral of his vision for the existing individual, to distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic, and to provide a guide to life.

The very essence of spirit is activity: it realizes its potentiality—makes itself its own deed, its own work—and thus it becomes an object to itself. Thus it is with the spirit of a people, which erects itself into an objective world—a complex of institutions . . . The relation of the individual to that spirit is that he appropriates to himself this substantial existence; that it becomes his character and capability, enabling him to have a definite place in the world—to be something. For he finds the being of the people to which he belongs an already established, firm world—objectively present to him—with which he has to incorporate himself. (Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*).

\* Kierkegaard's subjectivism is bound to be misunderstood unless one bears in mind that he is really interested in only one thing, viz., a supreme ethical choice. What one shall choose supremely is what one finds it in one to choose supremely, and can be nothing else (although this is not arbitrary and without direction). The object of a supreme choice is in the nature of things ideal, uncertainly real, and the more uncertain its reality is the more passionately must the man hold on to it in subjective inwardness, not in a blind affirmation but, on the contrary, with unrelieved recognition of its objective uncertainty—in the case of Incarnation, of its intellectual absurdity. Kierkegaard's incisiveness and despair exhibit to full view the scandalous peril of his position. Millions occupy the same position in comfort by allowing the recognition of objective uncertainty to slide into a bland affirmation of belief. Such common subjectivism Kierkegaard regarded as the extinction of belief. To depend for one's life upon the object of a supreme choice and to lay hold of it with one hand and with the other to hold on to its objective uncertainty and to hang suspended between the two, that is the meaning of faith; hanging upon them seems to pull them closer together but that is an illusion which comes of beginning to relinquish one's hold; grasping them with a firmer grip jerks them violently apart and starts the fierce pain of being torn asunder and the sharp temptation to loose hold of one and swing free: that is the subjective inwardness of faith.



On Kierkegaard's principle, it might be said that each of them following his own thought had reached a conclusion which, though uncertain, he was prepared to clinch with his life and to live by to the end. But it is not inconsistent with the requirement of decisiveness to attempt to reason out the differences which lead to opposed judgments. Both claim to be guided to their decisions by universally valid thought. Kierkegaard certainly rejected Hegel's thought as invalid, because it assumed a standpoint that was inaccessible to an existing individual. Only from a point outside existence would it be possible to survey the totality of existence. Within the process of becoming, the existing individual need not deny the whole, but cannot possibly know the end and survey the whole; his thought suffices only to light up the next step. This judgment applies to the interpretation of world history: "only by understanding this for oneself can one be led to reconstruct the life of one who is dead, if it really must be done, and if there is time for it. But it is certainly a topsy-turvy notion, instead of learning by living how to recall the life of the dead, to go and try to learn from the dead, apprehended as if they had never lived, how one should (aye, it is inconceivable how topsy-turvy it is) live—as if one were already dead." His point is that if one goes to history for one's life without having first a life of one's own, one has nothing to go by, no means of discriminating between the authentic and the inauthentic; it is to abdicate the responsibility of living and resort to helpless imitation; it is to be a member of an association, to identify oneself with the age, the 19th century, humanity, the public: it is to become a phantom. He would add that if one did first get a life of one's own one would not greatly interest oneself in world history. For he did not believe in history as an objective process revealing God.

The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation-process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is a subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness.

And

As for God, he is never a third party when he is present in the religious consciousness; this is precisely the secret of the religious consciousness.

He implicitly rejected Hegel's ethic because it was based on false assumptions and because it required an absolute choice of the dead past, but not because it called for humble participation in collective tasks. A particular human being should not wish to dominate others nor to have any special distinction, nor should he seek the illusion of greatness by identifying himself with some collective:

"to will to live as a particular human being . . . in the same sense as is open to every other human being, is the ethical victory over life and all its illusions." His individualism is not the vulgar refusal to be one among many, a drumming on the differential traits. On the contrary, he lays the whole emphasis upon the generically human. "Every human being must be assumed in essential possession of what essentially belongs to being a man. The task of the subjective thinker is to transform himself into an instrument that clearly and definitely expresses in existence whatever is essentially human." (Essence precedes existence!) His individualism is wholly religious and philosophic, a concentration on the individual as the sole source of the universally human, in reflective willing, authentic choice. He notes the levelling tendency of the age without political feeling; he sees it as playing his own game, forcing the issue, in its tendency either to throw the individual back upon himself, so that he comes to accept himself as one man amongst many and learns to be content with himself and to know his individual religious isolation, or else to draw the individual away from himself altogether until he is "lost in the dizziness of unending abstraction." He lacked the historical interest and understanding for an adequate analysis of the social situation, but he was saved from a merely literary treatment of it and from personal petulance by his firm anchorage in the religious and philosophic conception of the permanent function of the individual in saving and realizing the generically human. It is from this point of view that later existentialist thinkers have elaborated their analysis of the modern problem of depersonalization in a mass industrial society. This individualism is as far as possible from a narcissistic attachment to one's ego, a shrinking from the idea of losing oneself in self-transcendence. It was precisely because association with others in a collective venture was not an absolute venture but a substitute for one, "a fictitious movement of the spirit, a gesture in the direction of the absolute", that Kierkegaard distrusted it. "In general it is quite inconceivable how ingenious and inventive human beings can be in evading an ultimate decision. Anyone who has seen the curious antics of recruits when they are ordered into the water will often have occasion to perceive analogies in the realm of the spirit." The self in so far as it has achieved authentic selfhood in an absolute choice has given itself away absolutely. Extremes meet in Kierkegaard's own peculiar case: his absolute subjectivity becomes absolute objectivity in his total self-displacement before God, which is the effect of his persistence in a reiterated absolute choice of the infinite.

Kierkegaard's case is peculiar. His perpetuation of the moment of absolute choice is morbid, not a perpetuation in a sequence of

phases in which the choice is made good in the development of a personality and of a 'work', but a concentration of the whole life in a repetition of the empty abstract decision itself with increasing intensity. This fatal hypertrophy of will has a terrible fascination, for one sees in the dilated organ a living decision repeating itself like an accelerating pulse, separated from the withered body it should have animated. This was only possible because Kierkegaard fixed his absolute choice on the infinite and postulated this infinite in belief as a necessity of his life regardless of the balance of probabilities. Whether this was a thinly veiled nihilism, as it was certainly the outcome of despair, concerns Kierkegaard's personal tragedy and not the history of thought. For what he bequeathed to philosophy was his protest against 'pure' thought and irrelevant knowledge and his recall to the permanent basis of human living in the ethical isolation of the existing individual.

The will to will absolutely and the will to think absolutely are indefeasible, but perhaps illegitimate: that is the situation out of which philosophy emerges and with which it has to deal. Kierkegaard with Hegel's example before him is cautious about the aspiration to think absolutely. His own example is a caution against the pitfalls which beset the point of absolute choice, but first of all it is (and it remains) a summons to make an absolute choice. Because he painfully elaborated in flesh and blood his formidable epigram over christians and human beings, "calculated to make people aware", he is the boldest and the greatest of existentialist thinkers.

H. J. BLACKHAM



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT IN ROME'S HOLY YEAR

LORD MACAULAY said in a famous essay, over a century ago, that there was not and never had been on this earth a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. Since then the Roman Church, like other Churches, has suffered a considerable loss of religious authority and has had to exchange what might be called its natural allies, the Catholic monarchies of Western Europe, for more precarious partners. But this phase of decay, if it is indeed such that we are witnessing, is not unfavourable to historical retrospect. "The owl of Minerva begins her flight in the shades of evening."

Not untimely, therefore, is Mr. Howell Smith's critical study of Roman Catholic practice and doctrine.\* It is a handsome and well-printed volume of goodly size, but its eight hundred pages will not be considered even one too many by the interested reader. The author has covered an enormous field; he has traced his themes through many centuries; he has illuminated each one with relevant documents and tracts; and he has done this concisely, objectively, and with a tendency to understatement which enhances his persuasiveness. His work is not only obviously the product of long years of reading and reflection, but bears the marks, strange as this may seem in a Freethinker, of being a labour of love.

The topics treated in such a book as this cannot, of course, be invested with the charm of novelty. They are inevitably old acquaintances. God, the Trinity, the Madonna, angels and devils, the Creation, the Incarnation, Immortality, the Seven Sacraments, the Infallibility of the Pope, and a long series of others claim in turn the reader's attention until he comes finally to the Government of the Church and the author's retrospect and prospect. We have here something very unusual, if not unique: an encyclopaedic account of Catholic beliefs presented by no means unsympathetically yet critically and in relation to the process of their development.

Mr. Smith has such a gift of communicating his interest that his work should appeal to anyone with a taste for either history or religion, and it would astonish most Catholics if they were permitted to read it. But the prohibition is almost superfluous as only the tiniest proportion of Catholics have any interest, or more than the vaguest knowledge, of religious theory. The great majority of Catholics, to begin with, are still illiterate, and of the remainder only comparatively few retain more than odd fragments of verbiage

\* *Thou Art Peter*, by A. D. Howell Smith. Watts, 21s.

from the catechism learnt by rote in childhood. When we hear of "Catholic world-opinion" it is worth while to recall Mr. Joseph McCabe's summary of his investigation into the numerical strength of Roman Catholicism, made forty years ago.

"It means in plain English that the majority of Roman Catholics of the world to-day consists of American Indians, half-castes, negroes and mulattoes; Italian, Spanish, Russian and Slavonic peasants of the most backward character; and Indian, Indo-Chinese and African natives. These make up much more than half the whole. Further, the great bulk of the remainder are the peasants and poor workers of Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and Ireland" (*Decay of the Church of Rome*, p. 305).

The catholicism of these neglected masses consists in acceptance of the authority of the Church, of its ceremonies and sacraments, and of such of its teaching as has any meaning for them. And this acceptance is visibly not the result of any reflection or choice, but a social inheritance like their other customs and ideas. These naïve and sincere Catholics pray to Christ, or the Virgin, or to some kind saint for help in sickness or distress, for fine weather, good harvests, the recovery of lost property or lost love, and a thousand other things, as their ancestors prayed to other divinities thousands of years ago. They make pilgrimages to this holy place and that, and if their prayers are heard, make votive offerings as was done centuries before the Gospel was ever preached in Galilee. They want to go to heaven where they would be happy at last, and to be saved from being burned alive forever in hell; and they feel themselves strengthened and consoled by the rites of the Church as more primitive peoples have been by essentially similar magic and ritual since time immemorial. This, their real religion, is the reflection of their social condition and may be expected to subsist, under whatever ostensible theology, until they rise to political consciousness and become affected by the revolutionary wave now moving so rapidly from east to west.

Theology is, in fact, a framework created by intellectuals for intellectuals and imposed on the popular religion without affecting that religion so much as theologians are inclined to imagine. Christian theology was the speculative play of the mind of the period on the myths and quasi historical narratives which formed the basis of accepted tradition. The lack of diffidence in these thinkers is at first sight astonishing. But it will not seem so surprising if we remember that for them verification only meant congruity with scripture, and that the formative period of Catholicism was closed long before the rise of science or historical criticism or before theory was conceived of as an instrument for the mastery of the real world. In the meantime, the Catholic world-view had become

organized as an infallible system and could no longer be refashioned without a catastrophic schism. It is now too late for a new Christian theology. The play of scientific thought on Christianity to-day would merely act as a solvent of all its religious elements without exception. This is sufficiently shown in the field of biblical criticism by the work of Strauss, Renan, Schweitzer, Loisy, Guignebert, to mention a few names by way of example. By its very method, historical criticism treats miracles in the Gospel narratives as merely literary phenomena.

It is because of this change in the quality and purpose of thought that most of the famous formulas of Christian theology seem now no better than nonsense. Whether the Son was of the same substance as the Father or of a similar substance; whether He proceeded from the Father in time or out of time; whether the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father only or from the Father and the Son (a point on which continents are divided); whether there were one or two natures in Christ and, if there were two, whether they were mingled or separate: such issues do not seem to us moderns to be even questions in any meaningful sense. Texts such as the various creeds or the magniloquent opening of the Fourth Gospel do not contain real statements but only sacred rigmaroles.

All this may be as dead as the Latin tongue or ineffective like the pathetic "proofs" of the existence of God, which Mr. Smith examines with so much patience. But it is otherwise with obsolete prescriptions which the Church is able to enforce on the present generation. Taboos on divorce and contraception, for example, are an obstacle to rational sex-relations and cause a great deal of unnecessary suffering. Catholic notions about "natural law", derived fifty generations ago from the Stoics, are transformed to-day into a divine justification for capitalism. The irrationality of Catholic moral theory, when not corrected by common sense, may be illustrated by the well known passage from Newman quoted again by Mr. Smith. "It were better", wrote Newman, "for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail" than for a man to "tell one wilful untruth, though it harmed no one, or steal one poor farthing without excuse."

Mr. Smith is surely making an unwarranted concession to the Church in arguing that "Catholicism is not fascist, unless a hierarchical conception of society is fascist" and that "the machiavellian statecraft of a Julius II or a Gregory XIII is not favoured by the Papacy to-day." But is not a hierarchical social order in which those at the top are not responsible to those below essentially fascist? The "Führer principle", of which we have heard too much, is precisely that the leader is not responsible to the led



whilst they owe him unquestioning devotion. That is exactly the position of the Pope. He is responsible to no one, not even to the college of cardinals which elected him, whilst every Catholic owes him complete obedience in all matters of faith and morals, the decision as to what is included in these categories resting with the Pope alone. There was a time when the Catholic Church was a republic, when Bishops were popularly elected and were all regarded as equals. To-day no Bishop is more than a local Gauleiter of the supreme Führer, whose instructions he must execute though he has had no share in shaping them. As for the small clerical fry, they are mere spiritual robots, appointed to utter prescribed words and perform prescribed gestures and without any organ through which they could exercise a counter-influence on their superiors. Even Hitler never claimed, as does the Pope, to be the spokesman of God on earth. Nor was Hitler the head of an organization that extended over most of three continents, who could co-ordinate, as does the Pope, the political action of millions of followers everywhere, and tune a large section of the press in almost every civilized language. The Pope is indeed the head of a world-wide, authoritarian semi-secret society, and as such is obviously capable of immense mischief.

How is that organization used? Mr. Smith cannot be blamed for not answering this question adequately, for the answer would require a volume as large as his own. But he refers his readers to a work in which the answer is given with copious documentation—Mr. Avro Manhattan's *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century*. Mr. Manhattan shows that the Church concentrates its world-wide influence on a furious crusade against communism and particularly against Soviet Russia. In pursuit of this aim it has been the supporter and the accomplice of every fascist Government in Europe. The fascist-minded Pius XI stood by Mussolini from the first; the agents of the Papacy in Germany—the Nuncio, Pacelli, Bruening, Papen, Kaas were instrumental in installing Hitler. The Catholics Siepel, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg and Cardinal Innitzer paved his way into Austria, the Catholics Henlein, Mgr. Tiso, Father Hlinka helped him to destroy the Czechoslovak state, the Catholic Gil Robles and the Catholic Franco, in constant touch with the Spanish Hierarchy, and the Vatican, began the overthrow of the Spanish Republic. Here, however, the credit of the Vatican and its immediate agents must be shared not only with Hitler and Mussolini, but with the leaders of the United States, Britain and France. The fact that the Vatican never condemned the dreadful crimes of Hitler and Mussolini until these scoundrels met their fate is not only sufficient documentation of the fascist character of

the Papacy, but of the value of its claims to offer moral guidance to mankind.

It is, of course, true that the Popes have been obliged to modify some of their habits since the Renaissance. No contemporary Pope could afford to rush, sword in hand, into the breach of a city wall as did Julius II, or to provide splendid positions for nephews, nieces and illegitimate children as was then usual. But Pius XII, in his broadcast of 17 April, 1939, gave thanks to the traitor and mass murderer, Franco, with a fervour which recalls the rejoicing of Gregory XIII over the massacre of St. Bartholomew. And Dr. Simcox, who vouches for the correctness of the doctrinal expositions in Mr. Smith's book, has exposed the machiavellianism of the Archbishop of Westminster in pretending before the British public that he was in favour of allowing parents to decide as to the religious education of their children, while he knew perfectly well that this freedom was condemned by canon law. No, the Church does not change very much nor has it drawn the lesson from the defeat of its fascist protectors. The Papacy talks to-day the language of peace, but this is a necessary ingredient of the pontifical style. Its heart and soul is in the cold war; it will never condemn the atom bomb and the other, even more devilish, means of murder and colossal devastation by which the world is threatened, until these have been outlawed by the conscience of ordinary men. Mother Church will then claim credit for their abolition, but in the meantime will continue to place its co-ordinated and unscrupulous press at the disposal of aggressive capitalism in their common war against communism. Humanists should not forget that the Papacy condemns not only communism, but socialism in any form, liberalism, democracy and the right of private judgment in faith and morals. It stands against the twentieth century in so far as that century fails to find its ideal of government in the corporative state prescribed in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* and exemplified in Mussolini's Italy and Franco's Spain.

What are the immediate prospects of this Church whose ideology, apart from professional uses, belongs to history and which has staked its all on the side of capitalism in the present world struggle? Mr. Smith is convinced, of course, that the Church will pass, but appears to envisage its decay only after "the lapse of centuries." But it seems unlikely that the outcome of the conflict in which its fate as a political institution in European states is involved can be delayed for more than a generation.

During the past forty years great masses of workers in France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Poland, and Austria—the very homeland of Roman Catholicism—have left the Church, antagonized by its steady support of their political enemies. The illiteracy on which

Roman Catholicism has always thriven is being gradually overcome, and every decade sees a new diversion of interest, such as occurred at the Renaissance, only now on a world scale and affecting all classes, from religious ideas of any kind to the ever more absorbing concerns of secular civilization. It is now a long time since the sea of faith was at the full. The poet has heard

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating to the breath  
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Its continued recession is more dangerous than any storm to the  
barque of Peter.

JOHN MURPHY

## THE HUMANIST TRADITION

(Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Book III, 931-963)

SUPPOSE that nature suddenly sent out a voice and rebuked some one of us thus: "Mortal, why are you so preoccupied with death? You give yourself up to morbid moping. Why groan and weep? Fool, if the life you have lived so far has been pleasant to you, and its heaped up good has not run out as through a sieve and wasted unenjoyed, why not withdraw from life's banquet satisfied and serenely take untroubled rest? If, however, everything that you have had the use and enjoyment of has been thrown away and lost, and life gives offence, why seek to add more, which would again be foolishly wasted and pass away unenjoyed? Why not, rather, make an end of life and trouble? For there just is nothing else which I can contrive or discover which might please you: all things are ever the same. If your body is not yet enfeebled with age and your limbs worn out and weary, nevertheless all things remain ever the same, if you outlived all generations, in fact even if you never die." What could we reply if not that nature brings a just charge and expounds a true case?

Suppose now that some older man well advanced in years should complain and, unhappy, lament his death more than is fitting, would he not deserve that she should break out and chide him sharply? "No tears, you greedy old man, and forbear complaint. You are now withering away, having finished with the prizes of life, but because you always long for what is unattainable and despise what is in sight, life has slipped from you unfulfilled and without pleasure, and death sooner than you thought is standing by your head before you are ready to go full and satisfied. Come, then, give up all things now unsuited to your age, and with a quiet mind make them over to your sons: it had to be." She would be right, I think, both in reproving and in putting an end to him.



## BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT IS PSYCHO-ANALYSIS? By Ernest Jones. 126 pp. George Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.

Psycho-analysis is one of those findings of modern science which have met with most keen interest and controversy in the wide public. Its "sensational" aspect, however, receives more attention than the theory itself, and as a result, many misconceptions arise. The present book comes to elucidate those misunderstandings in trying to state briefly what psycho-analysis really is.

The author quite systematically introduces us into the subject with definitions and a short history of the science, and goes on to a description of the psycho-analytical theory proper. The reader is then led through various branches of human activity—medicine, education, anthropology, sociology and politics, criminology and law, art and literature, mythology and religion—and regards them from the viewpoint of a psycho-analyst. The subject-matter is described very briefly (almost too briefly) and lucidly. We have before us an excellent exposition of the theory and its applications for a careful reader. Here is a statement of conclusions without an attempt to prove them, and, therefore, "the reader is not put in a position to pass judgment on the subject" (p. 106). Nevertheless, there are some points, not in the theory proper (which cannot be judged on grounds of these conclusions) but rather in some of its suppositions and applications, that provoke comment.

As Jones explicitly states, psycho-analysis is founded on the supposition of determinism in psychic phenomena. "... [Freud] had at the outset of his scientific career . . . an unshakable conviction that mental phenomena, even the most trivial and fugitive, must have as precise antecedents as physical ones . . . his belief in determinism was thorough-going" (p. 17-18). "... psycho-analysis owes its very existence to a wholehearted application of scientific determinism (p. 90). Such suppositions, however, seem very far from the requirements of a scientific approach. For inductive scientific reasoning does not *believe* in a thorough-going determinism, but rather infers it (to be exacter: its *degree*) tentatively from a careful observation of facts. The complicated problem of free-will and determinism in connection with human action is "solved" by psycho-analysis arbitrarily, not on ground of empirical observation, but as a dogmatic supposition, which seems to be very far from the requirements of scientific method. Perhaps owing to this axiom, many features of human life have to be forcefully explained by psycho-analysis, even when the evidence is somewhat inconclusive.

Another fundamental deficiency is the non-explicit and vague use of normative statements. Psycho-analysis, qua an applied science aiming at the cure of certain abnormalities, assumes a distinction between a *desirable* and an *undesirable* situation of man. But the meaning of such a distinction depends on a clearcut normative criterion, and such should be explicitly formulated. Such a formulation is not attempted here, and instead we find throughout the book indecisive value-impregnated statements, as the following: "But we must not forget that neurosis [generally a most undesirable state] is an expression of the same forces and conflicts that have led to the loftiest aspirations and profoundest achievements of our race, and that neurotics are often the torch-bearers of civilization" (p. 105). Should we try, then, to cure neurosis, or not?

The applications of psycho-analysis, a matter very important in itself, probably lose some of their potential usefulness by their many vague and doubtful generalizations. A few examples will illustrate this statement. That the oedipus complex "played a vital part in the foundation of social, and, ultimately, civilized life", and that "the beginnings of all law, morality, and religion" are traced "to the reactions of remorse and fear surrounding it" (p. 84), such a view contains a highly speculative assumption, the scientific validity of which is quite doubtful. Not less curious is a somewhat less ambitious statement that "intolerance of other people's wrongdoing is a sure sign of an uneasy conscience" (p. 91). Is it not possible that such intolerance is sometimes motivated by sympathy with people to whom wrong was done? The attempt to explain trends in political ideologies of the last and the present centuries in terms of unconscious mechanism, through a highly speculative process connecting liberalism with the function of the "ego" and dictatorship with that of the "super-ego" (closely related with the idea of father), even if it were successful in itself, would not satisfy our main curiosity, namely: why did the "ego" prevail in the nineteenth century, and why did the "super-ego" win ground in our era? A thorough-going determinism should not leave that out!

As to the dialectical form of the argumentation, the following remark should be added. While disputing a certain controversial point not only *logical* arguments are exploited, but an opponent to these views is also *psychologically* analyzed. "We certainly should not hesitate to do so [namely, to admit certain statements of psycho-analysis] were it not that there are inner resistances, connected with the content of the unconscious . . . (p. 26). That almost reminds one of calling the opponent bad names; anyhow it takes the logical weapon from the hand of the non-psycho-analyst, for any logical and conscious argument could be "explained" psycho-analytically.

Anyhow, such a weapon is a double-edged one, and it is difficult to resist the temptation of using it against psycho-analytic argumentation itself. Thus, if psycho-analysis suggests that the relief experienced in a tragedy (which is distressing in itself) is explained by the security one derives from its inevitability (a strange sort of security, anyway) (p. '94), why not say that the supposition of determinism in psycho-analysis is but the expression of unconscious need for security? Of course, if we try psycho-analytic reasoning to explain psycho-analysis, we shall be led into a vicious circle reminding us of the famous paradox stating that "a Cretan says that all Cretans lie". One wonders how could psycho-analysis help us out in such a case.

M. ROSHWALD

CHARACTER ASSASSINATIONS. By Jerome Davis. pp. 259. Philosophical Library, New York, \$3.00.

THE ILLUSION OF IMMORTALITY. By Corliss Lamont, with introduction by John Dewey. Philosophical Library, \$3.95.

The first of these books deals with a problem that is not unknown in Britain. W. R. Inge, when Dean of St. Paul's, was plagued by newspapers for a time, constant attempts being made to ridicule everything he said or wrote, the plot to denigrate him failing after Bernard Shaw had come out in his defence. An attempt was made by a newspaper combine to break the practice of a well-known barrister, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, because in some action he had said something that its proprietor had considered derogatory to his wife. Recently, attempts have been made to drive John Strachey from public life, and one feels that similar attempts would be made on Aneurin Bevan had he not the power to hand out such devastating punishment with his tongue in return. This type of attack, mostly the work of newspaper gutter barons, is not very prevalent fortunately. Defamation was much more common in the past, however, in Britain, and this gives some hope that the situation may ease in the United States when that nation achieves more maturity. There is a real problem apart from mere bad manners, though, caused by the fact that in a parliamentary democracy it is the job of the respective parties to deflate their rivals in the public's estimation. They must arouse a suspicion that the leaders of the opposite party have no grip on affairs and are prejudiced against various interests and classes. There is a very fine distinction between this and outright denigration and it is no wonder that difficulty is found in maintaining the balance. It is a matter of convention, as in a boxing match in which the combatants must be vigorous in their onslaughts on their opponent to



make the contest worthwhile, yet with definite restrictions on what can be done.

Too much weight should not be given to the criticisms quoted by Davis of politicians. Franklin Roosevelt was "a dictator," "Communist," "Fascist," he was "inadequate," "a weakling," "an opportunist," "just any politician on the make," "snobbish," etc., etc. There does not seem to be anything exceptional about these, though that depends on the person who makes them. One should expect the top figures in political life to refrain from bandying such epithets, but it is not surprising that the little man should vent his spleen in such judgments. The attacks on trade unions one need not worry much about, either. It is the job of the trade unions to get such a grip on industry and public life that responsible people will not dare attack them even if they should want to do so. The racial problems are far more deepseated and serious matters. The United States has prided herself upon being able to assimilate all comers to that great country, but there is no evidence that she has actually any more capacity to do so than other peoples. In Britain one finds people bearing names which denote origins among the various nations of Europe who have long since been absorbed into the nation; the difficulty as in the United States comes with peoples of wider differentiation such as Negroes and Jews. Davis deals carefully with these problems, also with the "Un-American" hysteria the like of which we fortunately do not have in this country, probably because we have a radical party, the Labour Party, in this country to which people may belong, which is respectable because it must be respected.

*The Illusion of Immortality*, a new edition of which has appeared, is the best book upon the subject of immortality. Its author, Corliss Lamont, correctly assesses immortality as being the fundamental capital of theistic religions. In fact, christianity came in during a great wave of social despondency and its supreme though by no means unique quality of apocalypticism was its main recommendation. Jesus may have been principally concerned with ethical issues, but not so his followers who peddled the religion on the most commercial terms possible, selling immortality in the market place, cash down, so to speak. St. Paul was the Lord Woolton of his age, though a more scholarly figure. There are, of course, other strands, the paternalist god of the Israelites concerned with day to day practical issues or the Platonist conception of the class society continued into the nether regions with the god figure crowning the hierarchical system above the semi-divine earth-bound King or Dictator figure.

The author realizes, unlike so many that write upon this subject,

the importance of people's accepting *mortality*, and explains why it is not just a matter of common acceptance as with other phenomena. He says, probably with truth, that those people who are not concerned with the problem are those who themselves have, in fact, thought seriously on the subject in the past and only remember the conclusion, forgetting the processes by which they arrived at it. The acceptance of mortality has very important consequences both for personal and social life. It is for this reason that it is worth building a humanist movement to displace christianity. The doing so is largely a matter of politics; it is a matter of power. If certain current problems, mostly relating to the political and economic relations between nations, can be solved there will be a state of morale created in the people of the nations that should make a situation where it will be possible to displace apocalyptic religions or theories of state action on apocalyptic bases. This book should help to dispel the illusion that it does not matter what the individual or a community think on fundamental questions of religion and philosophy.

M. L. BURNET

PRIMITIVE LAW. By A. S. Diamond. pp. 445. Watts, 15s.

Dr. Diamond's valuable study first published in 1935 is reprinted in a handsome second edition. Combining a wide survey, including the first-hand observations of modern anthropologists, with a close analysis of the various early Codes, he set out to controvert with the evidence the famous views of Sir Henry Maine which had passed for definitive. Primitive law, he argues against Maine, is not a jumble of ritualistic rules, moral precepts, and legal prescriptions proper, showing its religious origin; it is not fixed, formalistic, and technical, occupied with points of procedure rather than with points of substance; it is not a confusion of crimes and civil injuries. The reverse of all this is the truth: primitive law is purely secular, empirical, tentative, and plastic, growing slowly to meet in a rough and ready practical way, with the growing complexity of society, the breaches of custom, itself flexible, which in the earliest and simplest stages of society are so rare. From the outset, criminal cases, dealt with by public opinion and the community itself, are distinguished from civil cases between man and man or one family and another; and at the outset crimes are few, limited to the kind of conduct (witchcraft, incest, and bestiality are the main examples) thought to be dangerous to the tribe, not merely injurious to the individual. Homicide, theft, and the like injuries to particular parties are settled between the parties without public judgment or punishment being called for. But out of experience of self-redress and private agreement emerges a generalized public opinion

of what remedies and reliefs for injuries are usual and proper, facilitating agreement; and when the central authority is strong enough this public opinion is readily formulated and enforced as law, without option of the parties to agree between themselves—the offence is now not merely an injury to another, but also an affront to the king. It was not until the later growth of ecclesiastical establishments and power that religion played its part, adding its sanctions and providing for its own interests, with the great opportunity afforded by the clerical monopoly of literacy and learning.

Dr. Diamond's main thesis is that there is a recognizable universal history of law, following stage by stage the same course of development with the material growth of each society throughout the world; that, for instance, law independently follows the same sequence of phases in India, Babylon, Rome, Britain, and in the primitive communities open to first-hand observation to-day; the mature stage exemplified in the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1914 B.C.) is not reached in England till about 3,200 years later.

This is all interesting enough, and for the student important enough, but is there any more general conclusion to be drawn which has application to modern questions? Rules of law, it is clear, are not at first moral rules, but they may become moralized. "The moral rule prohibiting homicide, for example, is derived from the legal rule of compensation for homicide." Dr. Diamond thinks that the passionate morality of the Hebrews was derived from the secular law before it was attributed to Jehovah as his will. However this may be, religious conceptions played an unmistakable part in the development of these moral ideas and became firmly entrenched behind them, and it would be a fallacy to suppose that their influence and validity owe nothing to these conceptions to-day. A history which reveals the secular origin of morals is in itself no comfort for those who fear the loss of religious sanctions to-day. On the other hand, the encouragement to be drawn from this evidence of the self-sufficiency of societies, their resources and plasticity, does greatly strengthen the humanist's confidence. On this evidence, there is more reason to fear the danger from conservative bureaucracies, especially ecclesiastical, than the danger from the raw masses.

CAN MATERIALISM EXPLAIN MIND? By G. H. Taylor. pp. 112. The Sunbeam Press, Bradford, 7s. 6d.

Materialism is more widespread today than ever it was, both in the schools of philosophy and in ordinary common sense thinking, and for that reason it has fallen into the background and is not commonly made the principal contention of any philosophy nowadays. But it is just as necessary for humanist rationalists to



revive and restate their argument for materialism from time to time as it is for Catholic rationalists to refurbish their proofs of the existence of God. Therefore, this little book is welcome, for the author is well-informed, phrases his argument excellently, and supports it with copious quotations of modern authorities drawn from a wide range of reading.

Mr. Taylor properly makes the capital distinction between reductive analysis and description: water may be analyzed without remainder into its components, but its own character and properties are what they are and cannot be described in terms of hydrogen or oxygen or of both together. Similarly, human personality may theoretically be analyzed into its component factors and conditions (there is nothing else there), but what it is in terms of how it behaves can only be described at its own level. At other points, however, he seems unnecessarily anxious to reduce human behaviour descriptively to elementary terms, which is the best way of spoiling the materialist's case, since it shows an unjustifiable interest in explaining away or the reductive side of analysis and a dogmatic faith in a simple type of causation. He is confessedly interested in materialism as the conclusive case against God and immortality, and that is a legitimate and necessary stage; but the possibilities of human living on the basis of materialism raise questions of human achievement in self-determination which would make the simpler types of reductive analysis inadequate. There need never be any question at any point of the supervention or accession or emergence of a metaphysical or hypothetical entity which is unconditioned; but once that bogey is disposed of one can be very ready to admit and to explore the complexity of the phenomena and the possibilities open to human living in the difficult and fragmentary region of choice and self-determination. There are different levels of determination in human behaviour (of course, no behaviour is uncaused), and things are what they are in immediate individual experience of them, as well as what they are publicly seen to be in a reductive analysis of them: it is on this front that it is most worth while to defend materialism nowadays, and it is because Mr. Taylor's argument seems to halt ambiguously between the old-time position and this present front that its fighting excellence is impaired. For all that, his book is skilful and effective action and deserves to be read.

HAS HISTORY A MEANING? By Benjamin Farrington. Conway Memorial Lecture, 1950. South Place Ethical Society, 2s.

Professor Farrington's Conway Memorial lecture is alive with ideas and warm with purpose: the great theme of history in contact with social imagination generates a glow of enthusiasm for the

achievements and possibilities of man if only we are intelligent and alive enough to be equal to our human vocation. In Mr. Farrington's hands the marxist analysis and method is fertile enough, however dubious the logic on which he thinks he relies, and one wishes that everyone who uses the method were as modest and reasonable. He traces the emergence of historical thinking at issue with religious and metaphysical modes of thought, and establishing itself definitively with Vico (and here he pays a well deserved tribute to the American scholars, T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fisch, for their modern presentation of Vico and his thought to English readers), and he takes up the task of historical thinking in its unfinished campaign against misplaced metaphysics and pseudoscience by castigating the late J. G. Frazer for thinking of history as a biological evolution of the human mind instead of a social process of civilization through institutions, techniques, and traditions.

Mr. Farrington concludes with the sketch of a new model for education—always a tempting and seldom a happy turning to take. When he says he would like every adult member of society to have been trained to think about the origin, function, and destiny of the State, of law, of religion, and of all the great institutions of human society, in order to make him a responsible, progressive, and enthusiastic humanist, is he not disingenuously embracing and suppressing the cultural question of our time? Of course historical thinking on these great questions is the substance of liberal education, but it leads to different conceptions of the function and destiny of law, of religion, of the arts, of the sciences, of the State, of industrial property, and so on, and if the thinking is a prescribed pattern of thinking, justified by the logic on which Mr. Farrington relies, which subordinates these institutions and activities to one social purpose dogmatically established and enforced, that is an altogether different cultural ideal from the idea of a free and fruitful interplay between developing social purpose and these co-ordinated but independent activities. The difference is a clash of ideals which is the crisis of our time, and Mr. Farrington runs across the chasm without the motion of a leap. We find it hard at the end to have to unmask the sorcerer in such a homely and charming guise.

All the same, this is a model lecture in this series because it combines so well imaginative warmth and social purpose with scholarly ease and direct and simple presentation.

THE FARTHER VIEW. By Oliffe Richmond. Chaterson, 5s.

In this poem the author reveals the outline and highlights of his own vision of the universe, with man emerging, the long history of religions, the outstanding experiences of mating and parenthood.

The vision is that of one who has passed from christianity to a humanist philosophy whilst preserving intensely reverent associations and memories. He gives a wholly modernist interpretation to the life and death of Christ and to the growth of the legend thereafter, but says, revisiting King's College Chapel, Cambridge:

I too in youth have tended ceremonies  
Hallowing me here; my thoughts and dreams have flown  
Aloft and mingled here with rapturous anthems  
That seemed to float halfway to heaven; I too  
Could house my faith and dedicate aspiration  
Among these symbols of the soul's desire.

He formulates the question:

Shall life be built on sacrifice of life,  
Of will, of self, to unself and the unknown,  
That Man's despair has pictured preferable,  
Despair of earth beguiled with hope of heaven?

Or shall we accept the loan of natural being  
As earthly creatures, man with brother man  
Build on the known, fulfil the human self,  
And find in life's redress the faith for living?

The poem is a developed affirmation of the second alternative. Yet typically the third section, which is entitled "Of Immortality; of Body and Soul," first shows the conception to be the outcome of wishful thinking arising from the instinctive urge to live, and then preserves the word for its emotional, evocative power whilst giving it a wholly other content—immortality lies in parenthood.

The experience of love between man and woman and of parental love provides the mainspring of Mr. Richmond's poetic emotion and gives his humanism its characteristic quality beyond the distanced christianity. The last section deals with this under the title "Of Love." It is a poetic defence of human emotion as it has arisen out of and above animal instinct.

The springs of Love lie between body and soul,  
Between self-dedication and desire.

It is with love rooted in instinct that he is concerned, and one charming passage begins,

How swallows pair I know not, whether in flight  
Across oceans and lands . . . .



It is of the family he is thinking:

Love-bred, love-disciplined, the child secure  
Goes witness to that heaven about his world,  
Unconscious of the seal his forehead wears,  
Authentic to the wise; and from such child  
The man, the woman is born to wield Love's arms  
In battle, if need be, against all rebel array  
Imperilling Nature's order.

Rather surprisingly, Christ's passion or St. Paul's charity are not allowed any place in the section of Love. It does not deal with the love of enemies and sinners, with Christian brotherhood.

The value of the poem will no doubt be felt most deeply by those who have shared the author's early experience of Christian piety and have come like him from thence to a humanist philosophy without emotional break. Since many do share this experience in one or other of its variations, the poem should speak to many.

VIRGINIA FLEMMING

DELINQUENCY AND HUMAN NATURE. By D. H. Stott. 460 pp. Copies, 5s., obtainable only from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.

Until the publication of this book, one has felt ever since juvenile delinquency increased during and after the war that nobody who wrote books on the subject or letters to *The Times* in the fairly recent correspondence on juvenile delinquency had anything really constructive to offer. The joint Home Office and Ministry of Education Conference appeared to be astonishingly fruitless, there being two schools of thought, those who wanted to do something immediately without knowing what they should do and those who wanted to wait for the result of further research without seeming to have an idea on what lines research should proceed.

Mr. Stott's book is an outstanding and constructive book and is the only one which has suggested a reasonable and practical line of approach to the solution of the problem.

The book is the result of an intensive study of 102 boys over a period of two years during which time the author lived in an approved school: at the end he came to the conclusion that "at heart most boys are just as much worried about their getting into trouble as are their parents or the Home Secretary." His general conclusion is that delinquency occurs when there is a need for the individual to escape from an emotional situation which has become either temporarily or permanently unbearable, and he names five main motives for delinquency. The anxieties which caused the

delinquency in nearly every case examined occurred only after a very long time in the boy's relations with his parents, and these strained relationships sometimes even reached back to childhood. In no case, Mr. Stott contends, was the delinquency mere thoughtlessness.

Mr. Stott stresses that a delinquent is a human being in distress and that the causes of delinquency go very much deeper than exposure to incidental influences such as the cinema, although such an influence might determine the form of delinquency. He states that the general lowering of moral standards and lack of home discipline should really share the blame for the increase. Further, he contends that as by increase in divorces and in the break up of marriages in other ways the pre-conditions for these deleterious emotional situations are multiplied, so we can expect a further lowering of moral standards. This lowering is not so much a cause of the increase in juvenile delinquency as something which goes along with it. The cure lies in building up the general emotional health of the nation.

He stresses that the basis of morality lies in good human relationships and cites a case where a woman was given 10s. too much change when buying some tickets for a ballet, and because the man in the box office had been so unobliging she did not take it back. In treating a delinquent it follows that one must try to bring a powerful new determinative influence to bear upon him, and in so far as good relationships are re-established and appreciated so one can as a moralist lay down conditions for their continuance. Therefore early diagnosis is all-important, so that there is time to persuade the parents to re-adjust their attitude or to place the child in a stable emotional environment.

Thus results tended to show that the problem of delinquency is in great part the problem of the unsatisfactory family. There was much greater frequency of delinquency among the siblings of the 102 boys studied than among adolescents as a whole: 1 in 18 compared with 1 in 620. What can one do about the delinquency-breeding family unit? They cannot be allowed to go on being shunned by neighbours and relatives. Its junior members are taboo to the children of self-respecting families. Even if attracted to a youth club their bad behaviour may render them liable to expulsion or correction. A rebuke will keep them away altogether. The children of the worst families, he says, do not even get as far as a youth club—they feel they are unwanted, outcasts. In effect then, Stott says, the social organizations for young people, in their present form, attract those whose need for human contacts outside the family is the least urgent and the most satisfied in normal other

ways. This is a gap in our social structure. To give hope, it is encouraging to find what little interest and sympathy averted a breakdown.

Although delinquency is often attributed to low intelligence, the average score of the 102 boys on the Raven Progressive Matrices Test showed them more intelligent than 36% of their age groups, a figure which shows them to be little below average.

Mr. Stott has cleared much ground in this excellent study and has made a foundation on which to build in trying to combat the urgent problem created by increasing juvenile delinquency.

MORA BURNET

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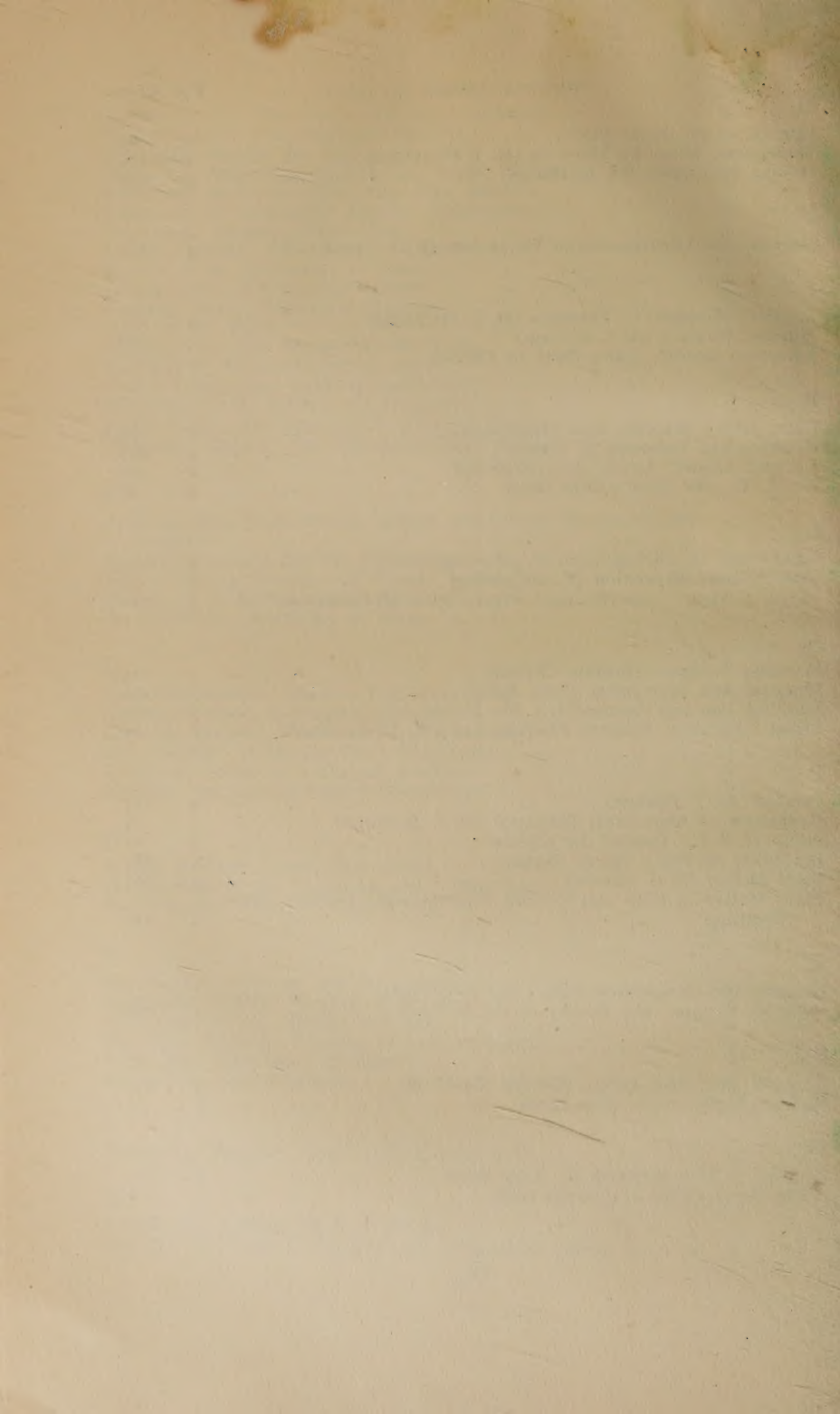
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